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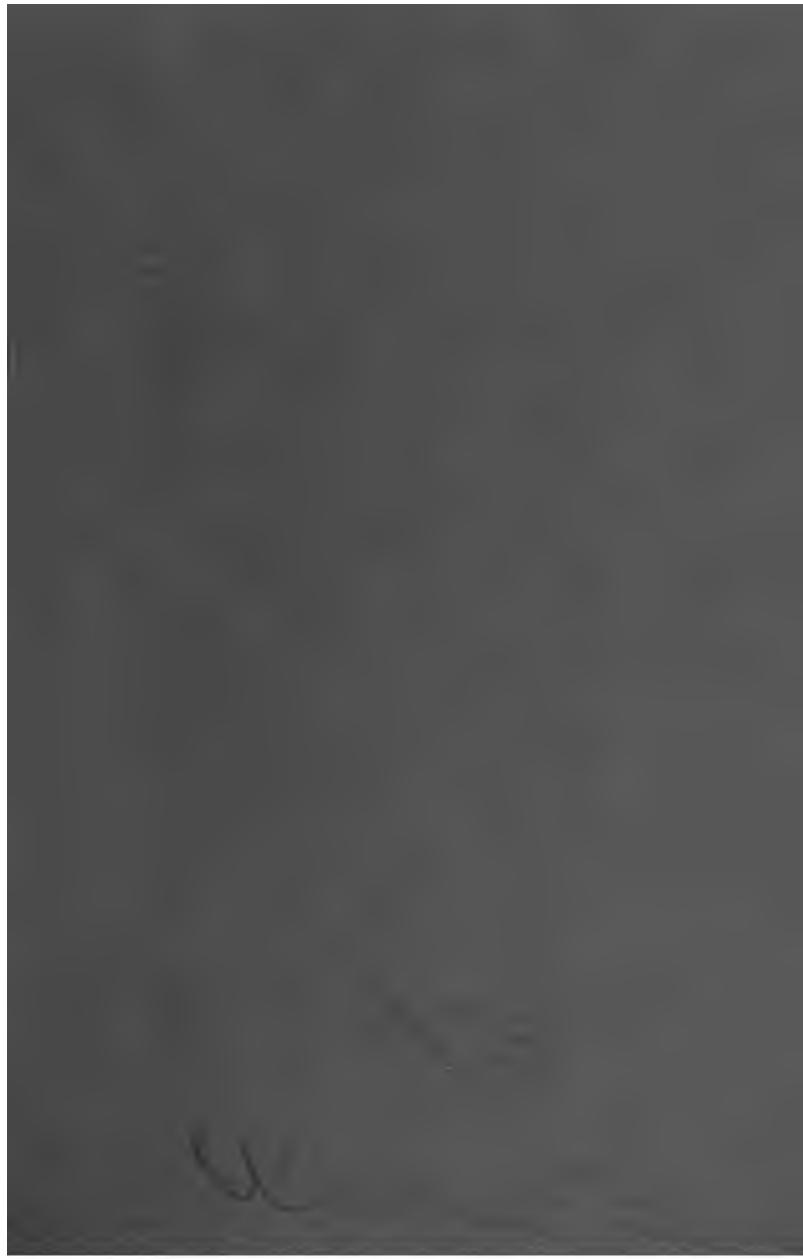
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# The Great Issue

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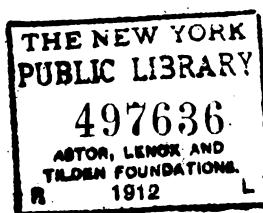
## The Undertow

By

EUGENE WALTER

New York  
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[1908]

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WINDY WIND  
OLIVER  
VLAARDING

# The Great Issue

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## CAST OF CHARACTERS.

1. RICHARD WELLS.....Star reporter on the staff of the *Globe*, later Chairman of the Committee of Seventy.
2. MARY CALVERT.....His sweetheart, reporter on the *Globe*, afterwards secretary to Miss Whitelaw.
3. HORACE WHITELAW..Multi-millionaire and chief stockholder in the *Globe*.
4. ALICE WHITELAW....His daughter.
5. EMMA WHITELAW....His sister.
6. KATE EMERSON.....Friend of Alice Whitelaw.
7. EDWARD MAYNARD..Managing editor of the *Globe*.
8. TAYLOR WARREN.....City editor of the *Globe*.
9. HARRY DAY.....Reporter on the *Globe*.
10. ETHEL SIMPSON.....Reporter on the *Globe*.
11. CHARLES WILBUR....Reporter on the *Globe*.
12. HERBERT PRITCHARD. Reporter on the *Globe*.
13. REDDY SMITH.....Office boy on the *Globe*.
14. AUGUSTUS HOFFMAN.Mayor elected on the Independent League ticket.
15. JOHN SHANLEY.....Superintendent of the gas works, political henchman of Whitelaw.
16. MRS. SHANLEY.....His wife.
17. JAMES O'HEARN.....Superintendent of the Consolidated Traction Company, political henchman of Whitelaw.
18. JUDGE WILSON.....A tool of Whitelaw.
19. MRS. GRIDGES.....Mary Calvert's landlady.
20. MRS. McFARLANE.....Proprietress of Way-side Inn.
21. MARIE LOUISE McFARLANE.Her daughter.



# The Great Issue

## CHAPTER I.

In the back room of a saloon in one of our larger inland cities one night—or, rather, early one morning in the month of August—sat two young men over the remains of a late supper. With the exception of the proprietor, who was frankly and peacefully snoring in a distant corner, they had the place to themselves. They had reached that state of intimacy which it is given some men to achieve, when they could with perfect contentment pass long periods in absolute silence, each occupied with his own thought. The elder of the two seemed to be in a particularly brown study. He was a man that would attract attention anywhere. A shrewd student of racial characteristics would have rightly classified him as the highest type of the so-called Irish-American. Had he been of more commanding height—he was but slightly above the average—he would have been a notably splendid figure. As it was, his face, despite a certain look of dissipation which at times made him prematurely worn

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and old, had vividness and strength and that intangible something which, like genius, no man has ever yet been able satisfactorily to define—namely, charm. His hair was thick and black and curly. His features, while good enough in themselves, had a certain irregularity common to his type, or as his friend Day had said: “There was no family connection between them.” His thin, bony and austere nose, the nose of an ascete, gave the lie to his large, well-cut mouth and scarlet lips. But it was his eyes, those Irish eyes, which are sometimes blue, sometimes gray, sometimes black; sullen, brooding and filled with fire by turns—the eyes of the dreamer and fanatic, which gave the final note of distinction to his whole face.

His companion was, perhaps, more purely the American type. He had none of his friend’s good looks. He was long and lean and loosely put together. His cheek bones were high. And under his heavy eyebrows a pair of small, shrewd gray eyes peered quizzically at an amusing world.

Having regarded his friend for some time in silence, he of the beetling brows, Harry Day by name, with an elaborate amount of pomp and circumstance produced a solitary

coin from the depths of a nearly empty pocket. This being early Thursday morning and pay day being Saturday and he and his friend being reporters on the largest daily the town supported, his poverty was both excusable and understandable. Besides, as it was only one cent, he was not risking his little all.

"A penny for your thoughts," he said. "Man, from the look of you, they're worth it." Richard Wells looked up and smiled. When he smiled he might have been a lad of sixteen.

Day would have been the first person in the world to ridicule the idea that he had any touch of poetry in him. But, once when a woman had spoken of Wells's smile as wonderful, he had said: "Yes, isn't it? You feel as if you could warm your hands at it."

"Have I been mooning long, old boy? I've been thinking how hard it must be for a foreigner, say an Englishman, for example, to understand our brand of patriotism. In his own tight little island, of course, it's quite different. They're all so close together, almost rubbing elbows. They have their local pride, of course. But in a sense it isn't quite so sectional. Take ourselves, for ex-

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ample. Here we are in the so-called Middle West. We know perfectly well that the people of the Eastern cities—Boston, New York and Philadelphia—regard us with lofty pity when they think of us at all. We weren't one of the original Thirteen Privileged States. We have no revolutionary relics in our City Hall. We have never burned middle-aged ladies for witches. We are not a center socially, historically or even commercially. And then skip over to the other coast. The Pacific Coast cities consider themselves equally superior, although I don't quite know why. Unless they regard themselves as typical of the youth and energy of the country. The South regards us all with condescension. Its "before-the-war" superiority is bred in the bone; even in this new practical generation. I tell you our Middle West gets it from both sides, top and bottom, and then some. The East and South don't know we exist. The West turns her young back on us. But let something like the Cuban War turn up, and there is no boundary line between the States. I tell you it's glorious. No wonder Johnny Bull, Francois and Wilhelm find us a puzzle.

"Damn it! I get mad every time I think

of it. It's all our own fault. Why should we kowtow to the East for ever and a day. We send our boys and girls East to be finished. We send our women folk East to find out how to rig themselves out, and if any of our young men get somewhere near the top they pack their dress-suit cases and take the first "choo-choo" to New York, and in a short time they are the worst of the lot. The only comfort is that if you take the Ohio Society, the Pennsylvania Society, the Indiana Society, the Virginia Society, the California Society and the rest of them away, New York wouldn't have enough able-bodied men left to run her street cars."

"All of which," said Day, "is true and interesting. Also Queen Anne is dead. But it doesn't strike me as being what you might call news. If I sit up until this hour of the morning I have a right to insist that you at least talk something I can turn into a Sunday Special, with the aid of my own unquestioned genius. Give me back my penny."

"Don't be an ass," said Dick; "besides you wanted to know what I was thinking about."

"I will say for you that you don't as a rule cite ancient history and revel in the

obvious. And besides, oh reformer, how are you going to change all this?"

"I am not thinking of changing it. If you hadn't interrupted me you would have seen what I was coming to. Here is our town in which we both have a natural pride which I honestly think is shared by the greater part of our fellow citizens. When my grand-dad came from the Ould Sod, when yours adventured to this Far West from the comparatively civilized region of Connecticut it was a howling wilderness, a frontier. And in a little over a hundred years, look what three generations have made of it. I tell you it is stupendous. Our city has passed from the hobble-de-hoy growing stage. We have one of the great inland seas for a front yard. Our principal avenue compares favorably with old Berlin's famous street of the Linden, I am told. And now our civic pride has at last been turned in the direction of progress along artistic lines. Under the direction of trained artists we are making splendid plans for the future beautification of the city. If only half of what is promised is carried out the East can sit at our feet. Look at New York. Some one once said that her

architecture was half Beaux Arts and half Bizarre. And it's true, too."

"Kindly observe, ladies and gents," said Day, in the tone of the dime museum barker, "that the Human Wonder passes from history to art without wetting his lips. Which reminds me that as day is about to break and my beauty sleep is lost beyond recall, I think Adolph might wake up and give me a fresh beer."

Adolph having been gently prodded into a state of semi-somnolence, consented to replenish the glasses.

"We were saying," observed Day, "that soon the East would be putting dust and ashes upon her head while we tried to hide our smiles behind our toil-worn hands."

"We will have no reason to smile," said Wells, in a sudden passion. "That is the hideous part of it. How can we smile? How can we do otherwise than hang our heads in shame when we have to confess before the world that we have no manhood left? That we have sold ourselves and our birthright not even for the mess of pottage. That we are owned body and soul by Mr. Horace Whitelaw, that after the coming election unless the miracle of miracles shall have hap-

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pened, he will have firmly riveted our chains in getting the gas and street railway franchises.”

“Aha,” said Day, “at last, my young friend. I have been waiting for this. But go slow Dick my boy. Don Quixote was a dear old thing and we all love him, of course, but we would shut him up in any old asylum if he were at large to-day. Nevertheless, oh—aren’t I just rich in similes!—my young David, the Philistine giant is just as big as in the old days and he has a lot of modern improvements and a brain besides. Go slow, go slow. Listen to the voice of wisdom. We can’t fight brainy men like Whitelaw, because he doesn’t play fair for one thing. Against our little \$30 per he has about the same number of millions more or less.”

“Ah, Harry, Harry, where would this old world have been if it had listened to such counsel? Your argument is not new, you know; there have always been modern improvements, by comparison. Still I don’t say that it is I who am going to attempt the impossible. Good God, I’m a John-a-Dreams; a man who is slowly grinding his brain to powder for \$30 a week, as you accurately observe. But at least let me have

my moments of honest shame for the good of my soul."

"For the good of your fiddlesticks, with all due respect, you can't fool me, Dicky, I know you too long and too well. You're the kind of dreamer who tries to carry his dreams into his waking, working hours. But be candid. Goodness knows, it's a little late in the day for us to be playing hide-and-seek with each other. I thought we had gotten past that."

There is just the suggestion of a hurt in his companion's tone. Richard Wells stretched his hand across the table to his friend, who clasped it warmly.

"You are perfectly right, Harry. Although, believe me, I did not mean to be disingenuous. The fact is I am so boiling mad I could choke. What do you think that skunk Maynard proposed to me to-night? I could hardly keep my fist out of his dirty face. He wanted me to join the Independent League, where all my friends are, to spy on them and sell them out to the *Globe*. Put the double cross on them for Whitelaw."

"That is going some," said Day, with a forlorn whistle. "Still it would have done nobody any good to have punched his face;

you'd have only lost your job and wouldn't have helped your friend or the League."

"Oh, I know, I know, but it's sickening just the same. I am pretty sure to lose my job anyway. When Maynard reports that I am a person with such silly old-fashioned scruples, the powers that be will be convinced that my day of usefulness on the *Globe* is over. Damned if I care much."

"Go slow, go slow," said the Voice of Wisdom.

"Look here, old man, see who's here. The sun is up. It may be too late for your beauty sleep, but I confess I would like to have forty winks of mine. Let's beat it."

Having once more aroused Adolph they proceeded to pay their reckoning and make their way out into the early morning. As they walked briskly along, the young day had a hint of autumnal sharpness; they relapsed once more into a sympathetic silence. It was only broken when they arrived at Day's gate, and then for the briefest good-nights.

"All the same," said Day, as he sleepily looked for his latch key, which was never in the same pocket two nights in succession, "there is an old saying about accounting for

the milk in the cocoanut, but not for the hair on the outside. There is more in this than meets the eye," he said, apparently addressing a stray cat that rubbed itself against his leg. "Dick may not know it yet himself, but something out of the ordinary has given him a jolt. I'll swear to it. Let's see. He's twenty-eight. It must be a woman."

With which profound remark also addressed to the cat, whose entrance he blocked by a strategic movement, Mr. Henry Day betook himself to a well-earned repose.

## CHAPTER II.

There may be women in the world in this day of the emancipation of the sex that really enjoy working at men's work and being independent, but Mary Calvert was not one of them. Not that she did not have a proper and natural pride in her work and in taking care of herself, when she might have been sponging on her married sister and her husband back in South Carolina. But she had a well-defined belief that she was distinctly out of her element. With her traditions and training she could not help having the instinct of the home-maker strongly developed. All the domestic arts were specialties with Mary. She used sometimes to laugh to herself at herself—which is at times a cheerless pastime.

"Here am I, the very best cook and nurse in the city of Charleston, if I do say it as shouldn't, and no chance to show off. There must be some nice fellow up North here who is just dying to be spoiled. I could show him a thing or two about what a good table

should be that he never even dreamed of, if this boarding house is a fair sample of what Northerners call living. You'd better hurry O unknown Knight; I surely am growin' to be an old maid right fast," said Mary to her mirror. It must be confessed that there was no evidence of it beyond her own statement. She may not have been perfectly sincere.

And there were times when poor Mary was woefully lonely and homesick. She tried to be brave and keep an unvaryingly cheerful face for the world. Indeed, she succeeded admirably. But there were times when, as she humorously reminded herself, that "unless she behaved herself she would have to ring the bell in the middle of the night and ask for a dry pillow."

It was only three months since her invalid mother had died. There had barely been enough money left to pay the bills. Confronted with the problem as to how she was to live on nothing a year—she had never seen that admirable volume published some years ago in England, "How to Dress on Six Pounds a Year, as a Lady, by a Lady"—she had decided that her old home offered but scant opportunities. Besides, it would be easier to become a working person among

strangers. Perhaps Mary was a bit of a snob. She called it proper pride. At any rate, she had written a curiously old-fashioned and formal letter to Mr. Horace Whitelaw, whose wife had been a school friend of her mother, years before—but with the Southerner the tradition of loyalty has not died out. It would never have occurred to Mary that there was anything unusual in her applying to the husband of her mother's school mate, just because she happened never to have seen him or any of his family.

As it chanced, she could not have done a wiser thing. Under the surface, so very, very far down that few people even suspected it, there was a residue of sentiment in Horace Whitelaw which refused to be stifled. Years before, when he had met and courted her in the old-fashioned sentimental way in an old-fashioned Southern town, a sentiment for the South and her people had been born in him and became part of his love for his wife. It was probably the purest feeling he had ever had. And although his wife had been dead many years, and the thought of her intruded but seldom upon his busy spider-brain, Mary's letter had stopped, for the fraction of a minute, the busy machinery of

his money-grubbing mind. For one second the memory of the days recalled by this Southern girl's letter made him hark back to a day when life's music did not consist solely of the chink of gold. It had been a happy time, too—“But 'pshaw! What was he doing! With James Blake coming in an hour, and no plan to circumvent him matured.” He tossed Mary's stiff little note to his secretary with a few hurried instructions. One hour later he drove a bargain with the unfortunate Mr. Blake, which was just a little sharper, just a little closer, just a little meaner, trading as it did upon the necessity of a hard-pushed man, than he would have done if Mary had not written. Mr. Blake was made, all unconsciously, to pay the piper for his associate's sentimental lapse.

Mary had been a little hurt at receiving a dictated letter. But she had put it down to Northern no-manners, and accepted the offer which it contained, namely, a position on the largest newspaper in Mr. Whitelaw's home town, in which it is to be presumed he had an interest.

Mary never forgot her debut as a reporter. Nothing more vague than her notion of her new duties could be imagined. She had

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stated in her letter that her friends thought she had some gift with her pen, which had, of course, suggested the offer to her correspondent.

Mary had pictured to herself her entrance upon the scene of her future triumphs. She had considerable imagination and was a bit of an actress as well, so the scene was well rehearsed. She had her lines at her tongue's end. She would, of course, be gracious and perfectly self-possessed and dignified. When the editor—would it be a man or a woman she wondered—asked her in what particular direction her talent lay, and what she preferred to do, she would choose dramatic and musical criticism. Mary liked the theatre. She had been four times in her life and she was sure she would love the opera.

Well, it didn't happen that way, or anything like it. And a very indignant Mary nearly shook the dust of the place off her trim boots and returned home to lead another army against the North, like a new Jeanne d'Arc. She had sent in her letter from Mr. Whitelaw to the city editor, a man by the name of Warren. It had been nearly half an hour before this person had condescended to send for her. What was her as-

tonishment upon finally reaching the private office to behold a young man, hardly older than herself, who took no notice of her entrance whatever. His coat was off and his sleeves were rolled up. He wrote at a prodigious pace with a large blue pencil, and at intervals bawled hoarse orders into a speaking tube at his elbow. Mary was very old-fashioned, of course. She never remembered to have entered a room and have a man remain seated. She was on the point of departure when the young man, who seemed to do everything with a rapidity and suddenness that appeared positively uncanny, swung round and faced her.

"You're Miss Calvert. We're full up just now. Don't need another person. Miss Simpson does all the work that we have for a woman. But as Mr. Whitelaw sends you I will give you a try. Be here to-morrow at twelve sharp. Your wages will be eight dollars a week."

He whirled back again and shrieked a fresh order into the tube, garnished this time with a touch of profanity. Mary felt that she was dismissed. On her way home to the boarding house she recovered her sense of humor. "He is certainly a breezy sort, that

editor person. How does he know I'm going to take his old job? He never waited to see." But she never doubted in her own heart that she would report for duty on the morrow. But it was fun to pretend to yourself that you were going to reject the ill-bred young man's offer with scorn.

The next few weeks flew by on wings. Mary could never afterward recall her first experience as a newspaper woman without gasping. And when at last she was released and made her weary way home she was too tired to do anything but crawl into bed. And still she found it all absorbingly interesting and exciting. And her first eight dollars—she wanted to have them framed. Mary had been right about her gift with the pen. She had one thing that is unusual with a beginner, that was facility. Always when she returned to the office after an assignment she fell into a sort of panic when she first sat down to write. The thing always seemed to be perfectly hopeless and Mary secretly longed for the safe shelter of her friendly pillow. But after she had compelled her reluctant pen to frame the opening paragraph she finished at lightning speed.

She was too self-absorbed to note much

that went on round about her, and too ignorant of affairs to be able to interpret properly the signs of unrest that pervaded the office. Politics were as yet a sealed book to our young Southerner.

Miss Simpson, the young woman of whom the city editor had spoken, was, of course, her closest associate. She was neither interesting nor attractive to Mary, as it chanced. She seemed abnormally interested in all the men on the paper. Even the compositors, whom one occasionally met in the elevators, were objects of intense interest. Truly all was fish that came to that young lady's net.

Now Mary had a distinct liking for the society of men; also it must be confessed that she was not above taking part in a flirtation —what pretty Southern girl ever was? But she was aristocratic to the tips of her pretty fingers. And the men of her family, while they had perhaps had many grave faults, had been men at any rate.

As it chanced in the first few weeks that she passed on the staff, Richard Wells was out of town on a murder case that was of absorbing interest to the readers of the *Globe*. His "stuff," as always, was read with avidity by all his associates who re-

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ceived it with enthusiastic praise. Richard was conceded to be the star reporter of the *Globe* staff.

"What sort of a man is this Mr. Wells?" Mary asked her friend Miss Simpson one day.

Miss Simpson made a noble effort to look self-conscious. "Oh, he is the great man of the paper. Why do you ask?"

"Idle curiosity, I suppose. He seems to be very popular with all the men. I like a man to be popular with men."

"Well, maybe he isn't popular with the women. The only trouble with him is that every woman falls in love with him, and he knows it. I don't mind confessing that I quite lost my heart to him at first myself. But things have been over between us for ever so long," added Miss Simpson, with a pensive sigh. "So I shan't stand in your way, my dear. Besides," she added virtuously, "he is terribly dissipated. But heavens, he has the most beautiful eyes."

"Oh, let me assure you that I have no intention of entering the Lists," and Mary with some heat. "From what you say he sounds rather odious. But he certainly does know how to write interesting stuff."

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Mary was beginning to be a bit of a critic, and she had secretly gloated over the splendid manner with which Richard's vigorous, virile pen presented the scenes of the sordid tragedy he was engaged in reporting. No other paper in the city had anything comparable with it. She was sorry she had asked about him. He must be a conceited shrimp. In Mary's lexicon of youth that term covered everything that was truly loathly. "Beautiful eyes, indeed!"

Nevertheless she felt a sudden thrill one morning when she heard Mr. Day—a rather nice chap whom she had heard was the star's great pal—jubilantly announce his return. Mary was out the whole day on a tiresome assignment that involved the interviewing of a long list of clubwomen who seemed to have taken a malicious pleasure in living as far apart as the limits of the city permitted. Having returned footsore and weary to the office about ten at night to hand in her stuff, she went into a mean little restaurant in the building and swallowed a belated cup of tea.

Miss Simpson was treating herself to some mussy éclairs when Mary joined her at the table. She did not feel in the mood to talk, so she paid but little attention to that lady's

ceaseless chatter. But her wandering thoughts returned as Miss Simpson concluded:

"Yes, and, of course, the first thing he did when he came back was to get tipsy. I call it perfectly disgusting. Any one else would have been fired right off, but his pull is a wonder."

The two girls were pulling on their gloves as they advanced toward the door. Mary had just stretched out her hand to the knob when the door burst open and a very disheveled young man checked himself just in time to avoid bowling her off her feet. He was followed almost immediately by three or four companions. All of them were obviously under the influence of liquor.

The leader had lost his hat. His handsome head was covered with a tousled mop of curly black hair. His eyes were undimmed by his potations. But about him was the unmistakable air of breeding which can never be counterfeited. He at once pulled himself together and bowed profoundly to Mary.

His ready smile was just touched with a sort of mock gravity.

"I beg your pardon. I hope I didn't hurt you. You see, I'm just back and in a horrid



hurry for my supper. I thought this place would be quite empty at this hour. You will be Miss Calvert; my friend Harry here has told me of the addition to our staff."

He just glanced at Miss Simpson sufficiently to recognize her presence. Truly all seemed to be "over between them." Bowing once more, he opened the door and the two girls passed out. Miss Simpson's head was high in the air. Mary bowed gravely in acknowledgment of his courtesy. For one moment their eyes met.

"Drunken beast! I think it is simply disgusting! How any lady can look at him I don't know."

"I fear you will think me not a lady," said Mary, in a tone which to her own ear had a strange unwonted thrill, "but, drunk or sober, he looks to be more of a man than any one I have seen since I came North."

### CHAPTER III.

Harry Day, who, as the reader may have already discovered, had a whimsical humor all his own, always insisted that the home of Horace Whitelaw proved a theory that he had long cherished in secret: namely, the close connection between portraiture and architecture.

"Mr. Whitelaw, with characteristic shrewdness, picked out an architect who happened to be a genius. 'Take a good look at me,' he said. 'I want my house to look as much like me as a house can look like a man.' Heaven knows it's a speaking likeness."

Making due allowance for Mr. Day's sprightly fancy, there was a certain amount of truth in the notion. Mr. Whitelaw's house stood, as a matter of course, upon the main avenue of the city. And it undoubtedly had a certain square-shouldered solidity and an air of holding its head high surmounted as it was by a large square cupola and facing down opposition by sheer force of character. Also it was perhaps a trifle florid in its orna-

mentation. Inside and out, money was a dominant note. Not that any one thing in itself could have been described as flashy by the most captious. But the general air of luxury and a certain magnificence could not fail to strike the most unobserving. And the trail of the Professional Decorator was over it all.

Perhaps the one exception was the room which was the particular domain of the master of the house. Even the professional decorator could not take any individuality from a room in which Horace Whitelaw passed so much time. It was part library and part office and part star chamber, where secret political meetings were held, sometimes in the small hours of the morning. Few of the guests who were entertained in this room ever visited any other part of the large house. There was a door giving on a small piazza which was more convenient. Why cross a large hallway in order to be let out by a pompous butler when one could do it so much more expeditiously one's self? As to the rest, the room was handsome in a quiet, subdued way. Rich in mahogany and subdued portières, a few choice pictures and water-color drawings, immense bookcases

lined with the standard authors, and innumerable inviting chairs. The one touch that at first blush might have seemed out of character was the number of vases of roses which bloomed from unexpected nooks and corners. But Horace Whitelaw had an æsthetic love for flowers and he idolized his only daughter, Alice. To keep her father's room fragrant with blossoms was one duty which Alice never neglected.

She was a pretty light-hearted little creature, spoiled to a degree and a little inclined to avoid the serious side of life. But then she had never had anything to develop her deeper nature.

Mary Calvert had decided that she was rather frivolous even for her years when she first met her, which was not for some months after her arrival in the North. Alice had been away undergoing that finishing process in the East to which our friend Richard so strenuously objected. She knew a little, therefore, about a great many things. But she was too much the daughter of her father not to have a strong vein of native shrewdness underlying her light exterior.

She, on her part, had taken a strong liking to Mary. And Mary, as is prone to be the

way with all of us, found her first hasty judgment somewhat softened. Open admiration often proves seductive to the steadiest head. Then, too, while Mary sincerely believed herself to be the most unworldly of women, she had a distinct natural inclination toward the Pomps and Vanities of this Wicked World. She loved luxury as the lizard loves the rays of the tropic sun.

And it certainly was very delightful after an uninterrupted course of boarding-house dinners—or worse, the dirty little restaurant where she had first encountered Richard—to dine properly with soft lights and appointments which were none the less stately because they happened to be comparatively new. The only other member of her patron's family Mary frankly considered an unmitigated goose; that was Mr. Whitelaw's maiden sister, who nominally presided over his establishment and chaperoned his daughter. In this judgment Mary was more nearly accurate. Miss Whitelaw was in reality both stupid and silly. She devoured an incredible number of novels and had only two serious interests in life—to be a little ahead of the fashion and behind her years in the matter of apparel and to be much in evidence in

society. As a digression and relaxation from these serious matters she imagined herself a hopeless invalid. As her delicate health prevented her appearing before luncheon, both her brother and niece were secretly reconciled to her invalidism.

After Alice's return to her native town, Mary found in some inexplicable way that her duties on the *Globe* seemed lighter. Perhaps it was because she was getting broken to harness. Still, she realized that it was not wholly that. Her assignments were certainly better. And she was allowed to add a little to her regular salary by doing some "specials" for the Sunday paper.

She enjoyed these immensely. She had a fresh point of view and a rather unusual supply of delicate humor. Sometimes in Sunday specials these gifts have their uses. Alice, who had always indulged herself in every way, formed the habit at not too regular intervals of dropping in at the office on her way home to luncheon to invite Mary to take "pot luck" with her. At first Mary, with a stern business air which sat prettily on her, protested. But when Alice would engage to send her off immediately after the repast in the car to her next assignment, pointing out that



in reality she was both saving time and performing a charitable action, poor, weak Mary found it hard to resist.

"I am getting to be a regular glutton, no doubt about it. I cannot resist an invitation to lunch, and you know it," she laughed one day. That was all very well as long as it did not occur too often.

Then one week Mr. Whitelaw was compelled to go East. He wrote a note to Mary in his own hand this time—no mere stiff little message from his secretary—asking her "as a favor to come and stay with his lonely little daughter during his absence." Of course Mary went. And that night a dexterous French maid arranged Mary's brown hair in a most becoming fashion. And Mary admitted to her mirror that she was a lost woman.

In all these weeks Mary had seen Richard Wells but seldom. He had spoken to her with a certain careless air of comradeship, which he contrived not to make familiar, and upon one occasion had praised a story of hers in a recent Sunday issue. Mary had blushed—a most becoming blush it was—to the roots of her hair. Of course she had been enraged with herself for doing so.

And then she rather irrelevantly added to

herself: "No wonder St. Patrick drove all the snakes from Ireland. Every Irishman is a serpent for cunning in himself."

But she secretly went to Mr. Warren, the city editor, and asked for a little extra time on a story she had already done and that night rewrote it almost entirely. Such is the baleful effect of the "Higher Criticism."

It was shortly after this experience that Miss Simpson, who, since the night in the restaurant had adopted a chilly attitude toward the hapless Mary, and who it must be confessed was eaten up with envy over the growing intimacy between Mary and Miss Whitelaw, saw her opportunity.

Coming over to Mary's desk one morning she greeted her with the effusiveness belonging to a past day.

"Good morning, dear. You're looking remarkably cheerful considering the sad news."

"What sad news?" said Mary, without looking up.

"Why, haven't you heard? The poor old *Globe* has lost its star reporter—or dispensed with him, to be exact. Mr. Richard Wells has departed."

"Departed?" said Mary, and there was frank dismay in her voice.

"Yes. Last night. I thought I would tell you. I knew you were so interested in—his work."

"I am very sorry," said Mary simply. "And I do think it a great loss to the paper."

"None of us is indispensable," said Miss Simpson with sweet philosophy. It was one of the busiest days Mary had had since she had joined the *Globe* staff. It was, moreover, one of those discouraging days when everything seems to go wrong with an enthusiasm worthy of a better cause. People who have promised interviews forget their engagements. Stories that look good for a column at least dribble out to a paragraph. Mary was both tired and disheartened. When five o'clock came she found her day's work, such as it was, practically over. She had a "special" that she could just as well do at home, and she had a sudden passionate desire to be by herself. On the plea of pressing work and a slight headache in the bargain, she called up Alice on the telephone and begged off from a partial engagement to dinner. For some reason or other even the eternal vanities seemed to have lost their flavor.

As she stepped out of the elevator she ran into Harry Day. Their acquaintance was

slight, but Mary liked his shrewd kindly face. And he was Richard's greatest friend.

"Oh, Mr. Day, is it true? Has Mr. Wells left the *Globe*?"

"I am afraid he has," said Harry ruefully.

"But he isn't going away? I mean, he is surely not going to give up his work?"

"No fear," said Harry. "Why, Dick out of a newspaper office wouldn't know what to do with himself. You see, it's this way—but may I walk along a bit with you? I didn't mean to detain you."

"I should be very glad if you would," said Mary graciously.

"You see," said Harry, after an embarrassed silence, "Dick hasn't any very definite plans as yet. But he is terribly interested in the coming election this fall. He's an awful old idealist, is Dick. And he has gotten the notion in his head that the people are going to be done out of some valuable franchises in connection with the gas and street railway companies. And I think I may safely say that he's going into this fight in some shape or other. Please don't say anything about it. But I have been mad clean through all day. You see, Dick and I have been pals for years, ever since we were kids. He has done

some bully work for the *Globe*, and then just because he won't do something that he thinks dishonorable they fire him. And of all the staff—and half of them are indebted to him for one thing or another—you are the only one who has even asked for him. I guess the rest are afraid of losing their precious jobs."

"How contemptible! But tell me. I fear I don't understand about franchises and all that sort of thing. Who is trying to get them from the people, and why?"

"To make a pot of money, of course. Forgive me, Miss Calvert, but the man Dick is going to fight is a great friend of yours—at least his daughter is."

"Not Mr. Whitelaw? Oh, I'm so sorry. I mean because it seems to me that he has a whole arsenal of weapons while Dick—I mean Mr. Wells, pardon me—has so few by comparison."

"Hasn't any at all, to speak of," said Day gloomily.

They parted at the corner with a cordial good-day. But as Mr. Day was about to re-enter his office he suddenly stopped in the middle of his favorite tune at a difficult passage, which he quite prided himself upon whistling with brilliancy and accuracy.

"Well, I'll be damned," he said jovially. "She's sure an all right girl, all right, all right. Is she the one, I wonder? Dick's a fox, if she is."

A short car ride brought Mary to her favorite part of the City Park, which was really beautiful. There was just that hint of renewed freshness in the air which tells one that summer proper is over and that the bracing days of the early autumn are at hand. It was Mary's favorite season. She was still too young to find the miracle in the return of spring, which comes to us when we grow older. She loved the gentle melancholy of the autumn. Somehow when she had reached that portion of the park adjoining the bridle path, beside which she had intended to walk, all the desire that had brought her here vanished. She felt suddenly old and weary. It seemed a decade since she had felt in the high spirits she had experienced that very morning. She sat down on a bench.

"I'm not going to cry here in a public park, particularly when I haven't a thing in the world to cry about," sobbed Mary convulsively.

It was just a little hysterical attack and was soon over. Mary hastily attempted to

dry her eyes as she heard the sound of an approaching horse. But before she had quite obliterated all signs of grief the horse had stopped in front of her and the rider had alighted and was at her side.

"Why, Miss Calvert, what has happened? I hope nothing has frightened you. There are occasionally some rough Italians passing through this part of the park at dusk. I wish you would let me know when you want to see our park. I am a gentleman of leisure just now, you know."

It was the old irresistible smile. For a moment Mary stiffened as she remembered Miss Simpson's speech. But her more generous nature rose above what had so evidently been intended to be malicious.

"Thank you, Mr. Wells, nothing at all has happened. I was just crying because I am a goose. Really, there's nothing wrong at all."

"At any rate, may I not walk to the gate with you and see you on your car?"

They strolled slowly out to the gate in a strange silence which Mary felt no desire to break.

When they had reached the corner, Mary insisted that he remount and leave her.

"I'm curious to see if you can really ride,"

she said, banteringly. "You know, I'm a Southern girl and was fairly born on horseback."

"Will you ride with me some day soon?" he said eagerly.

Mary's eyes sparkled at the thought of riding again. "I will, gladly."

And they shook hands like two good comrades. Mary watched him as he rode away. He had the easy, natural seat of the born horseman.

As she was getting ready for bed that night, Mary discovered herself singing "Young Lochinvar." And for some unaccountable reason she first blushed violently and then assured herself with considerable heat that she "didn't care if she were."

## CHAPTER IV.

"Father," said Alice Whitelaw, as she sipped her after-dinner coffee, "did I hear you tell Williams that you were expecting some of those horrid men here to-night?"

"You certainly heard nothing of the sort. I would hardly describe any one I might be expecting in any such terms to Williams."

"You know perfectly well what I mean. Have I to sit this entire evening twirling my thumbs all by myself? Are you going to shut yourself up in the library and talk business?"

"I fear I shall have to talk business for a little while. But it won't be very late. Mr. Maynard, the managing editor of the *Globe*, wants to see me for a time. But I don't think he'll stop long. Besides, Missey, if I didn't work an occasional evening as well as in the daytime where do you suppose all those pretty frocks and gewgaws that a certain young lady of my acquaintance is so fond of would come from?"

"Now, father, that's not fair! You know

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you keep on working because you love it. You have plenty of money as it is. You are only making more.”

“Perhaps you are right, my dear. But you must remember that father had to begin work so young that he never was able to acquire habits of leisure. That will be for the generation to come, at least in America and the West.”

“Oh, I know, I know,” said Alice. “Your pleasure is your business and your business is your pleasure. I sometimes wish for your own sake you would take to collecting postage stamps or take lessons on the piano and practice so many hours a day.”

“Why, Alice, my dear, how very foolishly you talk,” said her aunt in a scandalized voice. “It would be most undignified. What would people say?”

“I don’t in the least care what they would say. In the first place, father couldn’t be undignified. In the second place, I’m sure that theoretically it would do him a world of good to have something to occupy his mind besides his everlasting business.”

“Conceded—at least as far as your theory goes.”

“But tell me. I thought one of my fellow

toilers, Mary Calvert, no less, was coming to dinner?"

"Oh, at the last moment she telephoned that she had a headache and couldn't come. I'm very cross. I had some tickets for one of the Settlement concerts and I wanted Mary to go with me. Nothing would persuade Aunt Emma to go. She says you meet such horrid people. She is afraid of the smallpox."

"I thought the settlement work was quite fashionable this year," said Mr. Whitelaw slyly.

Miss Whitelaw's face assumed the expression of one who patiently and repeatedly strives to enlighten the ignorant.

"It is quite proper to send subscriptions. To go one's self is quite another matter. Mrs. De Forest told me only the other day that she had never gone herself or permitted any of her family to go. They always give the tickets to the servants."

"It is to be presumed that the servants have already had all the contagious diseases," said Mr. Whitelaw dryly.

"And that reminds me," said Alice. "Father, do you know, I think that Mary Calvert has to work awfully hard. You may

laugh, but I don't think it right for a woman to have to work at all hours of the day and night. I should be frightened out of my life if I had to come home by myself at the hours Mary does sometimes."

"She should have the maid from the boarding house call for her. I don't think it's at all proper. And Mary Calvert's mother was very much of a lady," said Miss Whitelaw severely.

"My dear sister, you sometimes speak without thinking. How could Mary Calvert afford to pay a maid to come for her? Do you know what she draws from the *Globe*? Eight dollars a week."

"Eight dollars a week! Why, how does she live on that?" said Alice.

"Ah, my dear, you know little of the seamy side of life. Yes, that is Mary's salary, as I happen to know."

"Father, do you own the *Globe*?" said Alice suddenly.

Mr. Whitelaw shot a keen glance at his daughter.

"Not exactly; I have a certain interest in it, however. But I am fond of Mary for her mother's sake as well as her own. In a few days when I have time to complete a plan

which I have in mind I may let you make a suggestion to Mary about some other work. But, mind you, not a word of it until I give you leave. Otherwise you may spoil it all."

"Wild horses shan't drag it out of me. Be a dear, and do something for her. She's an awfully sweet girl."

"Mr. Maynard, if you please, sir," said the butler.

"Very good, Williams. Did you show him in the library? Tell him I will be with him at once."

"Father dear," said Alice coaxingly as she put up her face for his kiss, "can't you give me the least little hint of what you are thinking of doing for Mary? It would be a pleasant thing to dream about."

"Not a word, then, remember. Well, I have been thinking that your poor aunt has a good many notes and things to write for such an invalid. Don't you think she could be persuaded to take on Mary for a secretary? I hear that Mrs. De Forest has set up one."

"Oh, splendid!" laughed Alice. "Mrs. De Forest, indeed! Aunt Emma will be delighted, I'm sure." And she gave her father another kiss for good measure.

"Ah, Maynard, glad to see you," said Whitelaw as he entered the library. "It was very good of you to come up. As you know, I think it best not to appear at the *Globe* office just at present. Have a cigar?"

Mr. Maynard accepted the proffered cigar and stretched himself luxuriantly in a comfortable chair.

"Not at all, not at all, always glad to come up here where it is quiet for a little chat. It's a rest to get the smell of ink and paste out of one's nostrils once in awhile. Well, I suppose the campaign may be said to be fairly opened. At least the opposing lines are getting more or less into shape so that we can see where we are at."

"I hear that a committee of seventy has at last been actually formed in the sacred cause of good government for the people, by the people, etc., etc."

"Oh, you know that? That was to be the principal item in my budget. Still there's no use in attempting to bring you news about anything in this old town. Carrying coals to Newcastle."

"Yes, I happened to hear that it had been satisfactorily accomplished. By the way, did you follow my suggestion in regard to Wells?"

"No good," said Maynard sharply.

"He refuses?"

"I should think he did. He flared up some days ago when I only hinted at it. But to-day, or rather yesterday, when I made him an out-and-out proposition he absolutely abused me. Of course I fired him at once."

"Fired him? Why, he's the best man you ever had."

"Well, we have to have discipline. Besides, I supposed you would want it done."

"On the contrary, I wish you had consulted me first. He's too clever a fellow to lose. I think we could have clipped his wings a little, modified his transports, as it were. Tell me, is he still drinking?"

"Oh, he falls off the cart once in awhile for a day or two, but we always winked at that. He's the hardest worker I ever saw, and a bundle of nerves. That kind always hits it up a bit."

"Well, I'm sorry to lose him," mused Whitelaw. "You see now we don't know just what he'll do. I wouldn't be quite so comfortable with him in the enemy's camp."

"Oh, he's one of those enthusiastic fellows that flare up like a rocket."

"In my experience," said Whitelaw, "en-

thusiasm is one of the things that you cannot always discount to a certainty. I'm a bit of a gambler, I don't deny. But—however, it's done, so we'll say no more about it."

"You can count on Shanley and O'Hearn!" said Maynard, with an effort to change the subject.

"I've just made Shanley superintendent of the gas company."

"Oh ho," laughed Maynard, "that sounds like a cinch."

The conversation turned to matters of detail in the management and policy of the *Globe*. Whitelaw's cautious mind disapproved of too positive a stand so early in the day as to the general attitude of the paper on local issues. On the broader issues, of course, the paper must remain true to the party it was pledged to support.

"Some of Warren's editorials are a little too peppery. By the way, who wrote the one headed, 'Stand Off?'"

"Harry Day. He's pretty clever, and never loses his head."

"Well, tell him you want some more like it handed in. He has the right idea."

Having declined a drink on the plea that his night's work was all before him,

Maynard departed, by the side door this time.

Horace Whitelaw, standing at the door of the library, watched his loose-jointed figure loping down the avenue.

"He who dances must pay the piper," quoted Whitelaw softly. "But sometimes I wish that I could deal with clean straight men a little more than I do. Well, once this deal is pulled off, I can afford to ship the whole crew—with wages instead of a notice," he added grimly.

He turned to meet the sleepy gaze of his daughter in the doorway.

"Oh, I got so tired of waiting for that tiresome person to go! I fell asleep hours ago on the couch in the drawing room. Father father, don't you ever get tired of it all? Let's go far away on a voyage around the world. Think of the wonderful, beautiful places we might see together. If you don't," she added with a malicious smile, "I will promptly fall in love with the most worthless and undesirable young man of my acquaintance. Only I should have a desperate time making the choice."

"Are you trying to blackmail me, young woman? Well, I'm frightened clear through.

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But I'll tell you what I'll do. Six months from now, if things turn out the way I want them to, I'll give in and we'll take this trip of yours."

"And if they don't?"

"Well, I think we'll take a longer trip in that case."

"Goodness! I hope you fail for once. I'm not sure that it wouldn't do you good," said his daughter saucily, as she gave him his final good-night kiss and made her sleepy way to bed.

Horace Whitelaw paced the floor of his library until far into the night. His busy methodical brain went over the plan of the coming campaign, detecting a weak place here, which must be strengthened, a doubtful place there which must be looked to; passing rapidly in review the places and men he had reason to feel sure of, always allowing for the chance that they might sell out to the highest bidder and preparing to raise the ante. He wondered what Wells with his dreaded enthusiasm might do now that the fool Maynard had discharged him in an effort to maintain a dignity which was purely imaginary.

"It beats the devil what the people with the

right heart and wrong head can do in this ridiculous world," he mused.

For the moment the idea that it would be interesting to live life over again under precisely similar circumstances came to him. And to follow deliberately the opposite path in the second experiment from that you had chosen in the first. No, he had not forgotten what enthusiasm and youth felt like. Oh, pshaw! What a nonsensical train of thought. He had always chosen the path that seemed to him to be expedient. Otherwise he would have been a poor man to-day. Enthusiasm and youth were very fine together. But the practical man must keep an eye out for the day when both have departed. Anything but poverty with old age for its companion.

He threw open the window looking out upon the avenue and breathed deeply of the keen night air. As he was about to close it once more his attention was arrested by a group of men standing just outside the gate of the drive.

"You don't understand, I tell you," said a clear, vibrant voice. "I begrudge no man the wealth of the Indies if it be honestly come by. But I tell you this man has fattened on the things he has stolen from the people. We

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may not be able just yet to make him give us an accounting. But God knows we will be awful fools if we let him have more that belongs to us!"

"Be quiet. There's some one there in the window," said another voice.

"I don't care if it's Whitelaw himself. It's the truth. This is my personal challenge."

"I accept it; and thank you for your warning, Mr. Wells," called Horace Whitelaw in reply.

He slowly closed the window, and having rung for the man to put out the lights, he went quietly to bed.

"The old man's been touching it up a bit all by his lonesome," commented the servant.  
"I never saw his face so red."

## CHAPTER V.

Mary Calvert was a girl of unusual simplicity of character. Moreover, she had sufficient strength of character to deal with herself with a directness and truthfulness, rare indeed. The night that she went to bed with "Young Lochinvar" on her lips, and a strange new song in her heart, she had cried some happy tears on the faithful pillow that had received her briny confidences in other circumstances. And, during the watches of the night, she had come to the sure knowledge that she had fallen in love with Richard Wells in the good old-fashioned love-at-first-sight way, so dear to her sentimental imagination. That was the way it should be, she told herself. That was the way she had dreamed it. And now it had come. She realized now why she had suddenly broken down on the park bench. It was at that first cold taste of fear that she was to see him no more. What if all the women in the world were in love with him, as that horrid Simpson woman had said. Why shouldn't they be? Cer-

tainly it was nothing to wonder at. On the contrary, it was a truism.

As for the Knight of her dreams, she ungratefully decided that he was a grotesque figure—poor knight, whom she had cherished so long! Young Lochinvar was a figure to make any knight of old look absurd.

As to whether he loved her in return? For the moment that was of secondary importance. Mary had the true woman's feeling that to be in love, even hopelessly, was a state of beatitude that was God-given. As for being loved in turn, one hoped for that, of course, as one hoped for heaven.

She climbed out of bed, wishing for a fresh handkerchief. But she lighted the gas—which wasn't at all necessary—and looked at her radiant face, radiant in spite of tear stains, in the mirror. Suddenly she leaned forward and kissed her own reflection on the lips.

“You happy Mary!” she said softly.

And then to prove beyond peradventure how really happy she was, she went back to bed and cried herself to sleep.

Her mood carried her all through the next day, which was rather a trying one. The city editor was treating himself to a spasm of

nervous irritability, which the day before would have driven Mary wild with despair. To-day she was only sorry for him. Poor creature! If he could only be in love. She remembered suddenly that he had been married just six months. And then she decided that his wife was a beast. Such is the justice of women.

A rearrangement of her schedule for the week permitted of her leaving the office every day at five. To be sure, she had to return for a while in the evening. But, then, nothing mattered. Besides she could take an hour to dream her happy dream.

During her hurried luncheon she planned what she would do with that hour. She would go to the park and sit on that self-same bench.

She started promptly on the hour. But at the door of the office they met.

"You were going to the park. And I told you not to. Guilt is writ large on your child's face." He pointed an accusing finger.

"Am I never to go to the park again?" she asked plaintively. But her gay smile belied her tone. She found it enchanting to be ordered about, this independent young woman.

"Not without me," he said sternly. "And

we are not going to-day. No, we are going first for a drive—we can't ride this time, for you haven't time to get into a habit—and then we are going to a dear quiet little restaurant that I discovered once long ago when I was young and have allowed only a few choice spirits to visit. And we are going to have a nice quiet little dinner and a nice friendly talk, which will last until I bring you back to the office. It is absurd that we don't know each other better when we are really such old friends."

She waited in a neighboring drug store while he fetched his horse. And then they drove away into the golden afternoon.

It had been many a long day since Mary had driven anywhere except in the Whitelaw motor car. And she at once decided, like every true horsewoman, that there was nothing to equal a good horse after all. Richard was evidently a horse lover himself. The moment he took the reins in his hand one could see that the sympathy between himself and the animal was complete.

The road soon led them away from the streets of the town out into the open country.

"How lovely it is!" said Mary. "Why, I had no idea the country about here was any-

thing like this. It's so rolling. How lovely and velvety that field is. And oh! What a perfect tree. Do look, Mr. Wells. That maple over yonder."

"I know that tree of old," said Wells. "I never see it without thinking of the first time I ever saw any of those wonderful dwarf Japanese trees. Do you know them? There was an exhibition of them in Chicago once when I happened to be there. They were perfectly enchanting. One felt like Gulliver lost in a forest in Lilliput."

"I shall never really like living in a city," said Mary wistfully. "I love the country so dearly. But somehow, even in spite of that, I can bear being lonesome so much easier in town. Somehow, in a town, you don't feel as if your case were exceptional. There must be so many other lonely people. In the country you feel as if you were the only lonely person on earth."

"Yes," said Richard gravely, "I think that must be so. But you are such a busy little woman I shouldn't think you would have much time to be lonely."

"Oh, if it weren't for the work—besides, I didn't mean to seem to complain. I'm sure I'm very lucky. I find the people in the office

very kind to me, a beginner. And then outside I have the Whitelaws, who certainly are most kind and thoughtful. You know it was through Mr. Whitelaw that I came to go on the *Globe*. Mrs. Whitelaw and my mother were girls together long ago."

"But there is no Mrs. Whitelaw? I mean, she's been dead some years, has she not?"

"Oh, ever so many. I never saw her myself—at least, I can't remember her, although I believe they both came to our house once when I was a mite of a girl. But after my own mother died I wanted to do something. There was nothing that I could well do at home. Then, too—it seems funny to me now that I have been a working person for all these weeks—but down home people seem to feel differently about a woman's working, except at a very few things. And, somehow, I didn't think I could do any of those things especially well. Of course I could have done sewing, or made cakes and desserts for people, and, I dare say, done fairly well. But I'd rather work for strangers. Does that sound very horrid? I don't mean it that way."

"I think it sounds very proper and right," said Wells gravely. "But I might as well

confess that I have a certain prejudice against a woman's working. At least, to be more exact, I should better say that I have a strong prejudice against a woman's having to work. It isn't right. Every woman in the world should have a man to look after her."

"And what if there are no applicants," laughed Mary. And then she wished she hadn't said it. So she hastened to another topic.

"That Miss Simpson has been on the *Globe* ever so long, hasn't she? I know she was saying the other day that she had known you ever since you joined the staff."

Wells grinned.

"Miss Simpson has known every man on the paper from the day she joined the staff. She has what the charitable might describe as a friendly nature. Poor thing, she can't help being vulgar. Her father is a low-down whelp—I hope you don't mind my strong language—who makes a mean living out of buying up the pay of the railroad hands and charging them illegal rates of interest for the favor. Some day he'll be caught at it. I know enough about it to put him in jail now, only I haven't done it somehow. I feel sort of sorry for the girl.

"Well—we're nearly at our destination. Do you think you can scare up an appetite?"

"Why, that's the Catholic Church spire over there. And isn't that—yes, it is—the dome of the Globe building? I thought all the time we were driving away from town."

"I'm afraid, for a country girl, your bump of location is abnormally undeveloped. We have been turning to the left for the last few miles. So we have been coming back to town in a wide circle."

"I can find my way perfectly when I am alone and have to," said Mary stoutly. "But I never pay the faintest attention to direction when anyone has undertaken to act as guide."

"So much the better," said Wells sternly. "For now I shall be quite sure that you won't be able to find your way to my secret haunt alone, or, worse still, bring some other fellow out here when the desire to return is strong upon you. There is no doubt that you will pine to come again. One has only to taste one good square meal of old Mrs. McFarlane's cooking to consider a mere banquet, served on gold plate, a mere 'hand-out' by comparison. See if you don't remember my words of wisdom the next time you dine at the Whitelaw's," he added slyly.

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They drove in through a wide gateway, which was too hospitable to have a gate, straight across a velvety lawn, up to the door of an old-fashioned house. A pretty girl of fifteen or sixteen looked brightly up from some work. Upon perceiving Wells, her face assumed an air of mock severity.

"I don't think you'd better waste any time tyin' your horse," she said with a sternly judicial air that sat comically upon a mouth that was doing its best not to laugh. "Mother was sayin' only yesterday that if you ever did come here again, she didn't know who was goin' to cook your dinner. We supposed you'd found a place where the cookin' was more to your taste."

"Why, Marie Louise McFarlane! Where in the name of goodness do you expect to go when your time comes? I never did hear such stories! Never in all my born days!" called a laughing voice from the kitchen.

Immediately following her voice, Mrs. McFarlane appeared in the doorway. She was enormously fat. How she ever managed to get about was a wonder. One of her favorite stories, told at her own expense, was how, years ago, when she had first come to the neighborhood, she had essayed to attend the

service in the old-fashioned Presbyterian Church in the town. The pews, after the old style, had narrow doors. Poor Mrs. McFarlane, after vainly attempting to squeeze in several of these inhospitable refuges, had to abandon her intention and retire in the utmost confusion. Since then she valiantly announced that she had become a regular heathen.

"I'm not just real fond of you myself any more," she announced. "Still I wouldn't turn anybody away hungry. Where have you been since goodness knows when?"

"You know very well that if I hadn't been away you would have seen me often enough," said Wells reproachfully.

He helped Mary to alight, formally presented her to Marie Louise and her mother, and then drove his horse into the barn. A cheery exchange of greetings between him and a pleasant-faced youth, the son of the house, came to Mary's ear as she sat with her hostess and Marie Louise.

"How wonderful he is with everybody," she thought to herself.

He was back almost upon the moment. Then he and Mrs. McFarlane went into executive session over the dinner. Mary was

amused to see how, with the utmost tact, he managed to get his own way. And yet he had the air of leaving everything to his deluded opponent. When it came to the subject of what wine they should have, Mrs. McFarlane left that entirely with him.

"I know more than you about what is good to eat, but when it comes to what to drink I never interfere," she announced.

"It's simply sinful," observed the stern Marie Louise, after her mother had retreated once more into the fastness of her kitchen, "how he fools my poor innocent mother every time. He always has his own way, and yet makes mother think she has had hers. I suppose you want your table in the upstairs porch as usual, spoiled man? Well, I must go and get it ready. How's Miss Simpson? She's been out here twice lately without you, with two different gentlemen. I will say for them that they were polite enough to leave everything to us."

With this Parthian shot Marie Louise vanished to the upper realms.

At the mention of Miss Simpson's name Mary's eyes contracted. For a moment she felt a strong inclination to cry. For a moment all the joy seemed to have gone out of

the whole evening. She knew Richard's eyes were on her, but she refused to meet them. The silence was unbearable, and yet for the life of her she couldn't think of anything to say sufficiently trivial.

"I've been coming here so many years that it seems almost like home," said Wells evenly.

Mary looked up and met his gaze. It was steady and untroubled. His fine mouth wore a half wistful smile.

"Then you don't trust me," it said.

She felt a sudden sense of shame. Poor Mary! One does not need to be a prophet, or the son of a prophet, sometimes, to see visions. For one second the peaceful, quiet scene seemed to melt away. In its stead she saw with crystal clarity a vision of the stony uphill road her feet must travel if she were to find happiness at last. She loved this man. Merely to be with him was happiness. The sight of his face, the sound of his voice, could turn the grayest day to gold. And yet, at a light word from a chit of a child, suspicion flamed in her telltale face. She felt abjectly ashamed. For very shame she could not find her voice to make the ordinary comment on his remark which would have been only natural.

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"I am spoiling everything! I must not, I must not!"

She raised her troubled eyes once more to his face. His look was one of understanding and forgiveness.

"I think I hear Marie Louise singing. That is a sure sign that she is ready for us. Shall we go up?" he said.

## CHAPTER VI.

They were sitting over their coffee. Wells, having obtained permission, was smoking his favorite pipe, a pipe that had apparently seen long and hard service. He had turned his chair sidewise to the table, and Mary could see across him an unimpeded view of sloping fields and distant hills to which the kindly ray of a young moon gave a heightened charm. Her face was flushed with happiness. It was indeed her hour. She remembered once, long ago, to have read a poetic tale called the "Glass of Supreme Moments." And yet she knew that this was not her "Supreme Moment." But it was a sort of lovely prelude.

The talk had been desultory, broken occasionally by intervals of silence. The note of intimacy and comradeship sounded through it all. Wells talked well. He had the supreme art of making conversation light without ever once making it frivolous. But it

must be confessed that to Mary it was not the matter, but the manner of his talk that moved her. His voice—the voice of the true raconteur—abounding in unexpected intonations and surprises which gave color and a certain vividness to his slightest experience, had ever and anon a caressing note when he more directly addressed her, which profoundly stirred her heart. She felt as visibly bathed in tenderness as the fields beyond the house were bathed in the rays of the kindly moon.

She felt that she herself was waxing almost eloquent through sheer happiness. She found her voice taking on new and unknown inflexions. She surprised herself more than once with a new and eloquent gesture, of which she was delightedly conscious.

“I read a little bit of newspaper verse the other day,” said Wells after a pause. “I don’t know about you, but I myself don’t go in much for poetry. But somehow this struck me. I suppose because I am such a moody creature myself. Do you mind if I try to repeat it to you?”

“Please do.”

“It is called ‘Moods.’ ”

“The Day is drear,  
What though the Sun-God shine!  
Would his bright beam  
Could warm Thee,  
Heart of Mine!  
The lightest breeze  
To me a bleak wind seems.  
The Day is drear.  
Return, Heart, to thy dreams.

The Day is fair  
What though the clouds hang low!  
Thou singest, Heart,  
To me, where'er I go!  
The biting rain  
To me a dear Caress!  
The Day is fair,  
Sing, Heart, of Happiness.”

“Will you write it out for me, some day?  
I am sure it would do me good sometimes. I  
have perfectly awful moods, horrid moods  
of doubt and suspicion, which make me sick  
and ashamed afterward.”

“I wouldn’t indulge myself in them any  
more than I could help,” he said softly.  
“Such things are so prone to grow on one.  
And, too, you not only make yourself un-  
happy but others as well.”

It was the only allusion he had made to the episode of Miss Simpson. Once more he turned to her his grave appealing smile.

She brushed the topic aside. It had threatened her hour once.

"I wish you would tell me—that is, if you care to—something of your plans, now that you have left the *Globe*."

"I should be glad to tell you all about them, only, up to now, they're a bit vague. I hardly have any plans, at least definite ones. I am going into the coming election fight, that's certain, although I don't just know in what capacity. You see, there's an organization called the Independent League, a Committee of Seventy. It represents all the good citizens who are for municipal ownership, who object to allowing the valuable franchises, that is the control and ownership, of the street railway and new gas plant to pass from their hands into those of private parties. Now please don't think I have anything against him personally, but Horace Whitelaw is the head and front of the movement I and my friends are opposing. It means more than fifty millions of dollars. No man should be allowed to make that amount of money practically at the expense of his fellow citizens."

"But does Mr. Whitelaw realize that?"

"I fear he is much too good a business man not to. Besides, it's done every day, in every city in the country. Mr. Whitelaw is by no means establishing a precedent: he is following one. I'm not blaming him alone. It is far more the fault of the public than of any one individual. The feeling prevails that the system under which such things can exist is all wrong. The trouble is that we as a people are too selfish. What's everybody's business is nobody's business. It is too much 'Every man for himself and to the devil with the whole graft business.' It puts me in a sort of fury sometimes. Only I know that I'm a bit of a fanatic and I try to go slow. There's Day, you know, Harry. He's my greatest pal. He thinks I'm irresponsible and pig-headed. At least he pretends to think so. At heart he knows I'm right. But, he points out with some show of reason, that the days of the Don Quixote business are over."

"Still you must go on, if you think you're right, mustn't you?"

"Yes I must. Of course, I'm half Irish, and to be 'Forninst the Government' is in the blood," laughed Dick.

"Well, I think it's just fine, all the same.

Only I do wish it wasn't Mr. Whitelaw. I'm sure he doesn't intend to do anything wrong. He is a gentleman, and an honorable man. And, oh, if you only knew what a huge amount of good he does in such a quiet way. No flourish of trumpets. Why, even his daughter Alice, to whom he is perfectly devoted, tells me that every now and then she finds that he has given really huge sums to this or that charity, and she only finds it out by accident."

"It is always the way," said Dick sadly. "The public virtues and the private virtues never seem to be embodied in the same individual. God alone knows why! Now—this is all between ourselves, of course—take the man whom the Independent League is thinking of running for Mayor; somehow to save my soul I cannot rid myself of a certain distrust of him. He sure is a weak brother. And I fear and distrust weakness more than viciousness, almost. Somehow one can respect an out and out scamp. He must at least be strong. If something could only awaken the Public Conscience!"

"But what part are you going to take in this—this movement?"

"Just now it looks as if I must go pretty deeply into the management of the League.

I'm by no means an experienced politician. But they need a head, if only a figurehead. Perhaps I can make up for my lack of experience in enthusiasm. I'm certainly ready to take off my coat and work with all my might."

"Then you're sure to win out," said Mary, with sparkling eyes.

"Ah, but there is so much prejudice and indifference to contend with. One is stamped at once as a sort of cheap anarchist and agitator. And I'm not that. I believe in government with all my heart. Only, if this country stands for anything, it stands for the government of the people. The whole system is rotten in all of our cities, almost without exception. Look at Philadelphia, look at New York, look at Pittsburgh. Ugh! It makes one ill!"

He turned to Mary suddenly and brought his fist down on the table with a violence that made the cups rattle.

"I beg your pardon. I didn't mean to do that. But let me tell you, Miss Calvert, some day there's going to be an awful smash-up. I only hope I'll be in at the finish and help a little bit to make Right right instead of Might!"

He rose from his chair and began to pace up and down the porch. His face was sombre and his eyes glowed. For some moments he appeared to have forgotten her presence. Mary did not mind being forgotten. The thought that he couldn't have talked to Miss Simpson in this fashion was balm to her soul. At the thought of what Miss Simpson would have done in similar circumstances, Mary laughed aloud. She could see her sitting in her place with her silly vacant smile. Her laugh recalled Richard to a consciousness of the fact that he was forgetting his guest.

"Pardon my seeming rudeness. But when I once mount my hobby horse I am quite likely to ride far. You must feel as if I had been addressing you as if you were a Public Meeting."

"Not a bit of it; besides, I liked it. Only tell me, do you often talk to people, I mean to women, as you have to-night?"

He gave her one of his direct looks, which made her suddenly realize that he read the petty thought in her mind. She had the grace to blush.

"Don't you really know that I do not? You should."

He suddenly pulled his watch from his pocket.

"You absolutely must return to the 'shop' to-night? Because, if you must, I fear we will have to start. I always hate leaving this old place. Somehow it rests me, more than merely the eye and the mind. I think some day, when my heart gets tired, I will come out here and lie down and give up the ghost under that tree yonder. It seems pleasanter than turning your face to the wall in the ordinary fashion."

Mary waited for him below with Marie Louise and her mother. Richard attended to his horse himself, although young McFarlane made protest. The drive back to the Globe building was all too short. Mary heaved a profound sigh when the "shop" was reached.

"I won't say thank you. You can't imagine how happy I've been. It seems a thousand years since I've had a drive. And the dinner and everything. It was lovely."

"We will go for a horseback ride some day soon. I must be away for a few days, but I will let you know as soon as I return. You have a telephone at your place, haven't you?"

"Blakeley 268. You can't forget it. Two and six make eight."

"Yes," laughed Wells, "so do five and three and seven and one and four and four. I was never known to remember a figure in my life. But I'll write it in the band of my hat."

As they stood at the door of the Globe building, she holding the reins, while he made the necessary memorandum of the telephone number on the inside band of his hat, Mary was suddenly startled by a "Good evening, Miss Calvert," in Horace Whitelaw's suave voice.

She started with an appearance not far from that of guilt, which did not escape her companion's quick eye.

"I really must go in. I'm late as it is," she said hurriedly.

For a moment Richard's face visibly hardened.

"Then don't let me detain you," he said coldly.

She turned silently into the doorway without further adieux. Why should such a miserable encounter have occurred to mar this perfect evening for them both? Almost immediately she retraced her steps. But he had already driven up the street. For several seconds she waited. At the next corner he must

turn. Would he look back? Mary was conscious of making a tremendous effort of will to compel him to do so. Whether or not she drew him by the mere force of her desire she could not say. But turn he did and the final vision she took into the elevator with her was of his gallant flourish as he bared his head and disappeared. She knew just how he had smiled, although the darkness prevented a literal vision of it.

Horace Whitelaw, in the meantime, walked briskly in the opposite direction. He was, as Mary had instinctively felt, not altogether pleased to see her conversing with Richard with an indescribable air which partook both of coquetry and intimacy. Still he was not altogether displeased. Already to his scheming brain had come an idea. There had been occasions before in his experience when it had been possible to turn a disappointment to profit.

At the end of a quarter of an hour his brisk but not hurried gait had brought him to the door of a house which, had it been the hut of a native in the furthest antipodes, could not have presented a more striking contrast to everything that Whitelaw had made his own house stand for.

On the one hand, broadly speaking, was simplicity, elegance, a feeling for pure lines and solidity. Here everything was tawdry, flashy and cheap. The mansion was euphemistically described as "Queen Anne." It abounded in gables with violent peaks. Bay windows grew with the irresponsibility of lilies of the field. The view from the windows was obstructed by knobs of glass, colored in primary hues. The whole mansion had an air of drunken irresponsibility. One felt that to prolong one's sojourn within its gaudy portals would be to tempt providence. Any self-respecting wind must raze it like a house of cards.

The Aladdin of this palace was one Mr. John Shanley, the newly appointed superintendent of the gas company in salary and name, but in reality a shrewd and unscrupulous politician of the variety known as ward heeler.

A faint smile came to Mr. Whitelaw's lips as he ascended the steps and pressed an electric button, which responded with the ferocious clang of a trolley-car gong. Almost upon the instant the door was flung open by Mr. Shanley himself. He was a short, thick-set man, with keen, beady eyes and thick, black

hair. He was in his shirt sleeves, but, to balance that informality, he wore a large diamond stud and an even more conspicuous ring.

"Ah, Whitelaw," he said with uneasy geniality, "I knew it was you. Just as the clock struck I said to the Missis 'That's Whitelaw you can bet your boots. He's always Johnny-on-the-spot to the second.' Come in, come in. O'Hearn's not here yet, but he's sure to be along in a jiffy. Probably stopped in the corner for a nip, just as if he didn't know there's always plenty of the stuff on tap in a house where I'm boss."

Mr. Whitelaw was permitted to enter at the end of this friendly oration, and, having been duly presented to the lady of the house, whose simple print gown was relieved by numerous diamond stickpins, naturally smaller than those of her husband, and an elaborate gold chain, accompanied his host into the dining-room, there to await the arrival of the tardy Mr. O'Hearn.

It was close on midnight when Mr. Whitelaw finally emerged safely from the perils of the "Queen Anne" portal. He made his way home walking more slowly, with the slight air of weariness appropriate to one who has com-

pleted a hard day's work. His general air was one of satisfaction.

"Well," he said to himself, "at least I have the comfort of knowing that I have taken every precaution possible. They're a fine pair of scamps, those two, but each has a large following of his own. Fortunately money is what they're out for. And of money, thank heaven, there's no lack. Alice is right, I do need to get away from it all. She shall carry out her cherished plan. Once this deal is through we will sail away as far as she likes. I wouldn't be sorry to go where I could forget it all for a time, myself."

Arrived at his own gate, he surveyed his own stately home with renewed satisfaction.

"Oh, Queen Anne," he exclaimed, "What crimes architectural are committed in thy name."

And as he made his way to his library, past the obsequious butler, he still smiled faintly at his own little joke.

## CHAPTER VII.

The week that followed was as lonely a one as Mary had experienced since she first left her home in the South. For one reason, Alice Whitelaw had gone away to pay a short visit to her school friend, Kate Emerson, and, as Miss Whitelaw and Mary had little in common, she seldom went to the house in Alice's absence. In her present dissatisfied mood this seemed to Mary almost a personal grievance. The boarding house was undergoing a sort of annual cleaning; Mrs. Gridges the landlady was seldom aroused to energy, but once galvanized into life, she was unflagging. The whole house was topsy-turvy and the comfort of her unfortunate lodgers was reduced to the vanishing point. Never had our pleasure-loving Mary so longed for the soothing surroundings of luxury.

After a particularly tiresome day at the office—a day when she had absolutely nothing to do until within a few minutes of the hour when she had hoped she might be permitted to enjoy the peace, if not the comforts, of her

cell-like room—the City Editor, inspired by some malignant devil, had given her an evening assignment that necessitated several miles of dreary car ride. Moreover, he insisted that she return to the office to write her story that night. Mary was on the point of tears.

“It seems almost a pity the idea didn’t occur to you some time during the day. I’ve had literally nothing to do since I came this morning.”

But the City Editor was proof against ill-temper and sarcasm, possessing as he did an ample fund of both commodities.

There is at times a certain dreary satisfaction in making life just a little harder than necessary. Fired with this impulse toward martyrdom, Mary did not go home to the comparative discomforts of dinner there, but chose to remain at the little restaurant in the building, which upon this occasion seemed dirtier and more ill-smelling than common. Having scanned the unattractive bill-of-fare, she decided that she wanted nothing but a cup of cocoa and a roll. While sipping the greasy concoction that passed for cocoa, she suddenly heard a voice on the landing outside which somehow had the timbre of that voice that had first fallen upon her ear upon a similar never-

to-be-forgotten occasion. Her eyes felt the sudden sting of salt tears. Hastily pulling down her veil, she paid the check, and, leaving her cup almost untasted, hurried away.

How she missed him. How she longed for him, ached for the sound of his cheery voice, the glance of his kindling eye, the touch of his hand.

"Oh, Dick, Dick, why did you elect to go away at this particular time, when I am so lonely and miserable and miss you so! My dear! My dear!"

For the moment she realized that she could have borne Alice's absence and the lack of material pleasures it involved, together with the discomforts of her wretched abiding place with equanimity, if only Wells had been at hand.

She dragged herself through her task without interest and, returning to the office, wrote her dull story with dogged patience. On her way up to her room, on the dark stairway, she stepped into a pail of dirty water left there by the slatternly servant. This was the finishing touch. Mary cried herself to sleep.

It was the next morning that she met Mr. Whitelaw on his way to the office. In response to her kindly inquiry as to his general

well-being, he had shaken his head with an air of mock solemnity, tinged with a little real sadness.

"I realize that I am really getting old, Miss Mary, and believe me, it is not a pleasant thought. But I know that it is an infallible sign of age when one becomes so dependent upon you young people. With Alice away and you neglecting us entirely, the house seems pretty dull to Emma and me."

"Oh Mr. Whitelaw, I am sure I never intended to neglect you. It never occurred to me to come over with Alice away. I thought both you and Miss Whitelaw were busy every hour."

"Indeed we have quantities of idle time on our hands, only don't breathe it. If we have the reputation for tireless industry, help us to deceive people a little longer. But why can't you come to dinner to-night?"

"Thank you. I will come with pleasure. At seven as usual, I suppose?"

The day turned out to be a busy one, to Mary's great relief. Somehow it always seemed that the day when nothing interesting appeared to be occurring in the entire world, when no one had any idea, on any subject, including oneself, was immediately followed by

a happy day when the brain seemed fairly to burst with vital thoughts, when the most irascible city editor was enchanted with one's lightest suggestion. This was one of those happy occasions.

Mary had discovered, quite by accident, that a very old man who had come to pass his declining years with a married daughter in the town had devoted his busy life to taking daguerreotypes and had actually had the great Daniel Webster for a subject. Warren, the City Editor, was almost intemperately enthusiastic over the proposed Sunday special, so Mary was sent out to beguile the old gentleman as best she might.

He proved most interesting. Apparently he was both pleased and flattered; he regarded the visit of a reporter from a modern daily paper not in the light of a personal compliment so much a tribute to an art of an elder day to which he had devoted the labor of a long life. There was something bracing in his prophetic optimism. He still had a keen interest in a world of which, in the ordinary course of Nature, he must soon take leave. Mary felt refreshed and strengthened by her visit.

She left the office early and thus had time

for a restful nap before going to the Whitelaws'. The dinner was, as usual, stately and formal, correct in the smallest appointment. She missed Alice's bright face and gay chatter. The coffee and liqueurs, at Mr. Whitelaw's suggestion, were served in the library. For a time the conversation was kept up with more or less effort. It was only after Miss Whitelaw, who confessed to having paid a wearisome round of visits during the afternoon, had dozed off several times in her chair that her brother laughingly suggested that she retire to her well-earned repose.

"I really believe you can trust Mary to me, or me to Mary, without doing violence to the proprieties. We are both of us quite elderly in feeling. You should see her at her desk at the *Globe* office, weighed down with the cares of the universe. If you had ever seen her as I have, when she was unconscious of my presence, you would know that she couldn't be frivolous if she tried."

Miss Whitelaw graciously consented to risk it, and, having kissed her brother in a stately manner on the forehead, bade Mary a formal good night.

Having asked her permission, Whitelaw lighted a fragrant cigar and, pacing up and

down the floor, began to talk of the days when he, a young man, had courted his wife, Mary's mother's dearest friend. She listened, absorbed and fascinated; for the first time she saw another side of this man, whom so many hated and feared. She resolved to tell Dick that he was quite wrong; surely no man who could speak with such reverent affection of his wife, dead these many years, could be unscrupulous at heart.

"My dear girl, I hope you will forgive me for boring you so," he said at length, "I don't know when I have been in such a mood before. Pray, don't run away thinking I'm an awful egotist. I want you to believe this, however. I take a father's interest in you for the sake of old times, as well as for yourself. I wish you'd try to believe that; I don't want you to make any mistake. A whole life can be marred by one little mistake. It is cruel but it is true. Will you promise to consult me before you take any decisive step of any sort?"

"Indeed, indeed I will, Mr. Whitelaw!" said Mary. Her eyes filled with grateful tears.

"Thank you," he smiled. "Now I feel more at ease. Do you know," he added in a lighter tone, "I'm going to send you home. It is

growing late. I have soliloquized so long. Working women need their sleep."

He rang for the butler and, having ordered the auto and thanked Mary for taking pity on two lonely old people, sent her home.

Awaiting her was a note from Wells announcing his return, also that he would call for her at nine in the morning with a good horse to take the long-deferred ride. It was the first time he had ever written her; she read it over and over, with beating heart and sparkling eyes and, woman-fashion, reading an added meaning between the lines. As she was falling asleep, one hand under the pillow where his note lay, she remembered her promise to Mr. Whitelaw.

The ride the next morning was a pure delight. Mary was a good horsewoman, having been, as she boasted to Dick, almost born in the saddle. As she made her proud words good to her companion's complete satisfaction, he relaxed a little from the attitude of responsibility that he had at first assumed, although he gave Mary the comfortable feeling that he was always watching over her. When the road favored, they would gallop for miles till they were fairly breathless; then, while they were breathing their horses, there

would be opportunity for talk of the most intimate sort. Richard was full of his new plans, hopeful and buoyant as a matter of course. Mary listened with eager ears.

"I think you've done wonders already. You are a born politician. Some day when you are President of the United States and I a grubbing old woman with ink smudges all over my hands and paste in my hair, I will tell the cub reporters how I once went for a ride with you."

Curiously enough this light banter struck no response in kind from her companion; instead his face clouded over.

"No fear," he said bitterly, "I am not the timber of which presidents are made. I have none of the 'king-becoming virtues.' 'Unstable as water, thou shalt not prevail,' might have been written of me."

He suddenly clapped spurs to his horse and was off like the wind, leaving Mary to follow or not, as she liked. For a moment she was distinctly piqued, but after a second's hesitation she followed at a more conservative pace. At a turn of the road he was already coming back slowly to meet her.

"Please forgive my bad manners. The fact is, quite by accident, you struck my mental

and moral crazy bone, but I'm a fool to be so sensitive."

Almost immediately he plunged into another topic, absolutely foreign to elections and politics generally. The morning came to an end without further mishap, although it must be confessed that Mary ached to risk another catastrophe by asking if Miss Simpson ever rode. In the end, she decided that it would be small; besides, she could find out from Miss Simpson herself.

From that day on they rode regularly two or three times a week, with the exception of the times when Wells was absent on flying visits, connected with the coming campaign. They talked politics in general a good deal, only they never again made them personal.

The telephone address must have been written in some more secure place than a hat band, for Mary frequently found messages upon her return home, or was called to the telephone before she went to the office in the morning. That she liked best. His cheery voice had a tonic effect good to begin the day on.

Sometimes they walked instead of rode. Mary gradually fell into the habit of talking shop with the former star reporter. That his

suggestions were most helpful goes without saying. Often, too, he gave her splendid hints for her beloved Sunday specials. The improvement in her work, or, to speak more exactly, in the value of the ideas she submitted, for Richard was too wise to allow her to change her style of work, which had a distinctly personal flavor, aroused favorable comment, even from the Managing Editor. To her boundless gratification, she received a small increase in salary, on the strength of her ripening experience.

Of the Whitelaws she saw less than formerly. She was in reality very busy. No newspaper editor permits talent to lie fallow and Mary's list of assignments increased daily in length and importance. She spent hardly any time at all in the office and Alice complained that she had given up the hope of ever again finding her there.

Of course she dined at the house at least once a week. Mr. Whitelaw was invariably kind and courteous, even cordial. But never again had Mary surprised him in anything like the mood of the night she had dined there when Alice was away. She wondered if the news of her frequent excursions with Wells had reached his ears. She had a distinctly

guilty feeling when she remembered her promise; but she consoled herself with the thought that he had been unfair in extracting any such promise from her: He had spent the evening telling her stories of the old days at her home when her mother was young and then had taken advantage of her being a bit emotional. He was indeed a clever man. Wells had once said that Whitelaw knew nearly all the tricks of all the trades. Mary found herself quite willing to believe it. It is to be feared she was a bit of a weather vane, veering with contrary winds.

Next to owing money to an exacting creditor there is probably no condition in life that gives one the illusion of the rapid flight of time so well as to be happy. Consequently in an incredibly short space of time Election Day was almost upon them. It had been a singularly warm, bright autumn, with perhaps just a hint of Indian summer.

There came a Sunday when they planned a grand excursion. It was to be an all-day jaunt practically. Richard was departing the next day on a trip that would keep him away a full fortnight. It was Mary's idea to make a sort of picnic, she to provide the luncheon. Her restless vanity craved his

praise for her housewifely accomplishments. She had the recipes for various sorts of sandwiches, salads, cakes, etcetera, calculated to excite the most jaded palate. Then, too, she possessed a family secret for the brewing of a most famous punch. Richard was to provide the various ingredients for this last.

They started about eleven. As Mary was coming out to give her horse the lump of sugar he had grown to expect as a preliminary to setting out, the Whitelaw automobile, with Mr. Whitelaw, Alice and her aunt, came down the street. Cowardly Mary felt that she had been fairly caught, but there was no trace of embarrassment in her gay bow.

They were to ride a longer distance than usual. It had been arranged that each should have an early breakfast, so that the banquet could be laid in a sheltered spot under a hill that was one of Dick's favorite haunts about fifteen miles distant. There was just enough sharpness in the air in spite of the brilliant sun to suggest that it would be really cold after sundown. The horses seemed to feel all the exhilaration of the occasion and were more than usually on their mettle. For the first mile or so Mary was sufficiently occu-

pied with her fiery steed to disincline her for conversation.

When his too exuberant spirits had finally been sufficiently subdued to make him willing to proceed at a pace that permitted of his putting all four legs on the ground at approximately the same time, Mary glanced at Richard to find that he was in the brownest of brown studies.

"Would a penny be too little to offer?" she asked.

"Oh, my thoughts are worth much more," said he. "As a matter of fact I was thinking how I should miss these rides of ours. By the time I return I don't expect to have time to sleep or eat. I shall just sit up in that old committee room and add up columns of figures like an automaton."

They rode briskly along, chatting of inconsequential things, until a sudden cry from Mary, who had abruptly reined in her horse, brought Richard to her side in an instant.

"Mary, what is it?"

"Oh, my beautiful, beautiful lunch!"

"Your lunch?"

"Yes, I left it on the table at that wretched boarding house. And I worked so hard over it and it was going to be so good."

She did not confess that her embarrassment at meeting the Whitelaws was the secret of her undoing. For a moment she was on the point of tears, but, happening to glance at Richard, she saw that he was making heroic efforts to keep from screaming with laughter. Fortunately her sense of the ridiculous saved the situation. For several moments they abandoned themselves to a perfect ecstasy of mirth.

“Well,” said Richard, drying his eyes after a time, “I suppose there’s nothing to be done about it. Let’s follow our original plan and go out to my hill, for I want you to see the view. From there we can take a short cut to our old friends the McFarlanes. We will have a picnic supper there and defer your superior spread until some more fortunate occasion.”

This plan they duly carried out. They were warmly greeted by even the scornful Marie Louise and, after a good but simple supper, started for home, as it was necessary for both of them to get back early. Once arrived, Richard suggested that they ride immediately to the stable and that Mary walk around with him to his lodgings while he fetched her a book that he wished her to read. She waited in the parlor with his pleasant-faced landlady,

while he ran up to get the book. As they stood at her own door, Richard munching a sandwich which Mary had insisted upon his sampling from her ill-starred bundle, the thought suddenly came to her that these delightful days of intimacy had come, temporarily, to an end.

"Shan't I even hear from you then when you come back?"

"I tell you what I'll do. I'll telephone you every morning in a variety of assumed voices so that there will be no scandal about it."

"Beautiful," said Mary. "I shall have the reputation of having a list of admirers."

And so they parted.

## CHAPTER VIII.

At last the great night, the night of the election, had arrived. For days before the greatest excitement had swayed the *Globe* staff. Mary had found her own work largely perfunctory. Everything that pertained more particularly to her department was "held over." For the first time she was glad that she was not "on space." The paper had room for nothing but comment and prophecy. She would have been worried out of her wits if it had not been for Dick's daily messages over the telephone. True to his promise he had called her up every morning. She realized that she could not have pulled through without that cheery greeting to start the day on. But hearing his voice was like seeing the sun rise. It braced her against his enforced absence.

She recognized the necessity of it all, but still it was hard. But, as she constantly reminded herself, that was the woman's part; to efface herself as far as possible when the man's work was to be done. And she loved

him the more for doing his man's part. He was leading what she secretly feared was a forlorn hope. But never once, to her, at least, had he lost courage or belief in his ultimate victory.

So far there had been no actual word of love between them. That must come as the reward after work. She divined that he was waiting for that. But would it come in the face of defeat? That was what troubled her. Ah, he must know that defeat or victory were one to her; as far as her love was concerned.

She had left the office shortly after six to dress for dinner at the Whitelaws'. There seemed no reason why anything should interrupt their relations. And she was genuinely fond of Alice and most grateful to her father. And never by word or look had they even ventured to criticise Dick, although, naturally, Mr. Whitelaw must know that he was a power in the opposing camp. After dinner, Alice and her friend, Kate Emerson, who was paying her a visit, were to invade the office of the *Globe* under Mary's protecting wing. She rather dreaded that ordeal. Supposing after all Dick should lose? And even supposing he should win? Would that be less embarrass-

ing? Mary shrugged her shoulders. She would not borrow trouble.

The two other girls were in a state of high excitement, Kate Emerson especially so. She had never been in a newspaper office in her life and her eagerness to undergo the experience was quite inexplicable to Mary. Alice's attitude toward the evening's programme—indeed, toward the entire election in which her father was certainly deeply concerned—puzzled Mary not a little. It wasn't that she was indifferent exactly. But she was not enthusiastic in the least. And she affected to think—Mary could not believe that she was sincere for a moment—that on the whole it would be rather a good thing if the election went against her father's declared interests.

"I'm not at all sure that a good beating wouldn't do him a world of good. I told him so to his face the other night. You see, he's always won all his fights, and continued success must have a bad moral effect. It is sure to undermine his character in time. Defeat is a stimulus."

Alice's smile as she delivered these extraordinary observations was as mature as the Sphinx. Mary shook her head in sheer perplexity.

The local room of the *Globe* presented a scene of sufficient excitement and nervous bustle and confusion to stimulate even Mary's pulse to a certain extent. The air was charged with electricity and everyone seemed to be working at the highest possible pressure.

As Mary herself had a few little matters of detail to attend to, she made a place in the window for the two girls, from which they could see the torchlight procession that was presently to pass. A large window commanding the finest view had, of course, been reserved for the daughter of Horace Whitelaw. From this point of vantage the two girls watched the busy scene with interested and amused eyes.

The paper was about ready to go to press, as the returns were nearly all in.

The large, garret-like room, with its dark corners, made the more shadowy by contrast with the electric lamps hanging over the various desks, presented a scene of the greatest confusion, although to Alice's keen eye there was a certain method even in the disorder. Her own orderly soul was dismayed at the general untidiness of the place. The floor was littered with waste paper, cast-off proofs and

numberless newspapers. Alice wondered to what use, if any, the few waste-baskets at the side of one or two desks were ever put.

In one corner of the room, at a large old-fashioned desk, sat Mr. Warren. For the moment he seemed to be the head and front of all the seeming confusion. How he could accomplish anything in the state his desk was in seemed little short of miraculous. It was piled high with copy and newspapers. "Ink wells to the right of him, paste pots to the left of him, gally-length proofs in front of him while he volleyed and thundered."

"He will be quite speechless by to-morrow, poor thing," reflected Alice.

But to-morrow was not yet, so the City Editor continued to shriek for reporters, blaspheme down the speaking tube and howl in the telephone all at once, without, apparently, taking breath. It was exhausting even to witness the performance. Meanwhile, as unconscious of the bedlam inside as of the tooting horns, the cheers and other election night sounds that came clearly to the ears from the street below, several reporters—among them Harry Day, whom Alice had already met—wrote at a high rate of speed with all the effect of comparative placidity.

They were, for the most part, coatless and hatless, although one or two wore both coats and hats.

"One would think that their coats and hats were sort of union garments," giggled Kate Emerson. "They apparently have to come off together."

At a long table in one corner of the room sat three men busily engaged in adding interminable columns of figures, while a fourth "played tunes," as Kate Emerson expressed it, on an adding machine. At short intervals a slip of paper would be passed to the stereopticon man, who penned the message on his glass and threw the bulletin on the white sheet across the street. Each message was greeted by a fresh roar and a louder tooting of horns. Everywhere were bustle and movement. The only person who appeared uninterested was a bored office boy, who, in response to calls of "Copy" or shrieks of "Reddy" from the City Editor, shuffled listlessly across the floor. He had the patronizing air of one who has consented to oblige. Apparently his serious business in life was chewing gum, which he did earnestly and unremittingly. Only once did his untiring jaw relax. That was when, in passing quite close to Kate Emerson on his

way to the stereopticon artist, he winked at her with portentous gravity, to that young person's boundless amusement.

The two girls were too interested to talk. Kate, of course, giggled at irregular intervals, but Alice was busily occupied with her own thoughts. This scene of bustling activity had almost a symbolic meaning for her. In a sense it visualized for her her father's career. She felt for the first time the fascination of it all.

"Poor old Dad! Of course he'd find it hard to give it all up even for a time. How terribly bored he'd be. It's quite like an actor giving up the applause and the lights and all the rest of it, to sit quietly at home. I never sensed it all as I do to-night. I guess it would be impossible."

Her reverie was broken by Day, who took the opportunity to come over on his way from the copy desk.

"Why, good evening, Mr. Day."

"Good morning, Miss Emerson. Do you catch the time on the clock?"

"Good gracious," said Kate, "I've never been downtown at such an hour in my life. I feel dreadfully dissipated."

"Here, Day," called the City Editor, "write

me a lead on the election, for a box on the first page."

"What language they use," said Kate Emerson, as Day hurried away. "It's quite as unintelligible as baseballese."

The City Editor hurried over to the copy desk. Alice's quick ear caught Richard Wells' name. And as she had a shrewd suspicion that her friend Mary cherished more than an ordinary interest for that same young man, she listened with interest.

"I don't understand this stuff that has been coming in from the Board of Elections," said the City Editor.

"What about it don't you understand?"

"Well, at 11 o'clock, when it was pretty near certain that the Independent League had elected Hoffman, I telephoned for a statement from some one of the Committee of Seventy, any one. And a long statement came from Dick Wells."

"Well, what of that? He's the chairman, ain't he?"

"Yes, but he's kept pretty well in the background."

"Now that he's won out, I suppose he wants to get in the limelight."

"Uh-huh."

"I say, Wilbur," called the City Editor to one of the reporters, "how long did you see Wells at the City Hall?"

"Oh, half an hour," said Wilbur.

"Talk to him?"

"Not much."

"Had he been drinking?"

"Didn't notice. Anyway, he wasn't jagged."

"What was his attitude?"

"How do you mean?"

"About the election."

"Oh, he was tickled to death."

"Sure thing. But did he finally come out and 'fess up that he is the chairman of the Committee of Seventy?"

"Yes, and that he had run the whole campaign practically alone."

"Have you written that?"

"Sure."

"Good. Wells is a smart fellow and he certainly has given us a good licking."

"Goodness! It begins to look as if Father were defeated. I wish I hadn't said I hoped he would be, even if I did meant it. I suppose Mary will be glad. Her 'young man' must be something of a hustler to beat my father."

"Good evening, Miss Whitelaw," said a voice at Alice's ear.

It was Maynard the Managing Editor. He was, as it chanced, one of the men whom Alice had assigned to her private black list. So her smile was not as cordial as it had been when it beamed on Harry Day.

"Can you tell me where I could catch your father by 'phone? I have tried both your house and his office."

"I think you will find him at the Union Club, Mr. Maynard. At least he planned to be there."

"Thank you," said Maynard, and he hurried into his office, which was divided from the room in which Alice was sitting by a partition which went only part way up to the ceiling.

Having called up the club and directed that Mr. Whitelaw be sent for, Maynard waited, the receiver at his ear, with an angry scowl on his face.

"Warren," he called.

The City Editor was at the door in an instant.

Maynard handed him a slip of paper.

"*The Globe* concedes the election of Hoffman, Independent League candidate for

Mayor, by from 1,500 to 2,000 plurality," read the City Editor.

"Bulletin that on the sheet and say good-night."

"All right."

At that moment Whitelaw's voice sounded in Maynard's ear. Instinctively he lowered his own harsh tone in reply. The conversation was brief, and when Maynard hung up the receiver his face had cleared somewhat. Whitelaw was coming to the office almost immediately. He would be sure to have some plan, resourceful as he was. After all, if they had lost the Mayor, they still had the majority in the Council. It was not beyond the bounds of possibility that three of the Councilmen could be approached. Then, if the new Mayor vetoed the franchises, two-thirds of that body could carry it over his head. But they needed twenty-one votes, and so far they had only eighteen. And Dick Wells was at the bottom of it. He had read his statement with its rather flowery reference to the "Awakening of the Public Conscience." Dick was a bit rhetorical at times, particularly when his Irish was up.

Mary, in the meantime, had finished her work, which enabled her to play her role of

hostess with better grace. She had conducted her guests through the composing room and even taken them up into the cupola to see the view. Both she and Alice had succeeded in avoiding the topic uppermost in the mind of each, the result of the election. Mary felt, with some justice, it must be admitted, that Alice should be the first to broach the subject. Alice understood that perfectly. She intended to take the lead in the matter. Only it must be in her own way and in her own good time. She was not the daughter of a party boss for nothing.

But now the girls had gone down to the car under the protection of Harry Day. Mary had remained behind on the plea of some final work. In reality she was waiting for Richard. He had found time on this evening of evenings to telephone her that he would come for her to the office. Mary's heart was filled with gratitude and pride. It was her lover whose name was on everybody's tongue. Her lover, who had won a losing fight against all the might of prestige and money. And, in the midst of it all, when he must be overwhelmed with rejoicing friends, he had time to think of her, of her, Mary. Surely he loved her.

As she sat at one of the vacant desks, busy

with her happy thoughts, Maynard and Warren came out from the inner office.

"My goodness, Miss Calvert, what have you been doing? Do you know what time it is?" said Maynard pleasantly.

"Oh, I've been getting up my Sunday stuff and watching the election crowds."

"Anything like South Carolina?" said the City Editor smiling.

"Oh no indeed. It was so exciting. Miss Whitelaw and one of her friends have been with me."

"Her father's on his way down now," said Maynard.

"That's too bad. She's just gone home in the auto."

"Well, your dear old Southern Democracy got an awful slap in the face," said Warren.

"I suppose it's almost like being a traitor to turn on your own paper, but I'm glad Mr. Hoffman was elected."

"Why?" said Maynard.

"While I'm very fond of Miss Whitelaw and her father—he got me my position, you know—I do think it's terrible for that gas company and that street railroad to get those franchises."

"You're becoming a regular anarchist," said the City Editor.

"She's certainly on the road," laughed Maynard. "She's become a night-hawk. All she needs now is the bum beer, the bum sausages and a card to the Union."

"But who's been converting you?" said Warren.

"Mr. Wells has talked to me for hours and hours every night he has taken me home."

"Does that mean every night?" said Warren.

"That's telling," laughed Mary gaily.

Maynard's brow had darkened once more at the mention of Wells' name.

"Well, your friend won to-night, Miss Calvert. But take it from me, he'll be sorry."

"Why?"

"If he paid more attention to common sense," said Maynard, with growing annoyance visible in his manner, "and less to his gang of agitators, he'd be apt to eat more regularly."

Mary flushed. She noticed the change in Maynard's tone.

"I'm afraid I've said something wrong. I'm very sorry. Mr. Wells has been such a good friend."

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"You couldn't do anything wrong, my dear girl," said the City Editor, patting her kindly on the shoulder. "But you may get into trouble unless you go home."

A shrill screech from the speaking tube sent Maynard hurrying across the room. Apparently, the message was a pleasant one, for his face cleared once more.

"You go home, young woman, or I'll discharge you," he said as he went out.

"Oh, I hope I haven't said anything to hurt you, Dick. I wouldn't do that for anything in the world. You know I wouldn't, sweetheart," said Mary, to herself.

It certainly was late. She feared that after all she would have to go without waiting any longer for him. Something might have detained him, and yet it was unlike him not to let her know. Besides she couldn't stay in the office all by herself any longer. As she was ruefully making up her mind to take her departure, Harry Day's quizzical face appeared in the doorway.

"Why, Mr. Day, didn't you go home?"

"No, but I thought you did."

"Mr. Wells telephoned he'd be down for me."

"So that's the way, is it?" said Day smiling.

"That's one of the ways," said Mary. "Mr. Day, may I ask you a question?" she added seriously.

"Miss Calvert, to fall in line with your custom of Southern chivalry, permit me to say that I could find no more congenial employment than handing you out answers every twenty-four hours of the day."

"Splendid. I hardly realize that I'm in the North."

"Oh, I'm there very strong with the soft stuff. What do you want to know?"

"Mr. Day, you're Mr. Wells' best friend, are you not? I want first to say that I admire and respect Mr. Wells more than any man I've ever met. Won't you help me as only a man can, to help him in turn to stop drinking? He's in this fight alone. He's as sincere and honorable as a man can be. But I know, while I, as a Southern woman, have what you Northerners might consider very liberal ideas on the subject of drinking, that he is drinking too much. It cannot fail to hurt him and hurt the cause that is so near his heart."

Day's face sobered instantly and the quizzical twinkle left his keen eyes.

"Miss Calvert, I wish you'd make a fuss over me that way."

"What way?"

"You know the way. But anyhow, I'll tell you what we'll do. We'll form a partnership, Calvert and Day. And its object will be to divert the time, the attention and the desire of one Richard Wells from the fascinating temptation of third-rail liquor."

"It's a bargain," said Mary. And they shook hands.

"Well," said the junior partner of the new firm ruefully, "I suppose as a token of good faith on my part I shall have to swear off myself."

"Will it be so hard?"

"Well, it won't be a cinch."

"Day," called the City Editor, who suddenly appeared in the doorway, "go upstairs on the special edition make-up, like a good fellow. Whitelaw's just come, and I'm hunting Maynard. Still waiting, Miss Calvert?"

"Still waiting," said Mary, a bit drearily.

"I'd give Wells thunder for being late."

"I shall," said Mary.

She walked slowly across the office and looked out into the empty street. She had made up her mind to wait. She couldn't,

somehow, go to bed after this trying day without seeing him. She wondered if she had done wisely in speaking to Day about his drinking. As she stood with her back to the doorway, humming one of the favorite plantation songs of her childhood, Dick Wells appeared at the top of the stairs. He staggered slightly as he came in, but, seeing Mary, pulled himself together with an effort.

## CHAPTER IX.

"Tired, little girl?" he said, with an effort to make his voice quite steady.

Mary turned to meet his gaze.

"I'm rested, now that you've come," she said simply.

"Oh!" she exclaimed brightly, "hasn't it been exciting?"

"Wasn't it!"

"And you won."

"By the skin of our teeth. Lost the Council by four votes, but elected our Mayor."

"Which means?"

"That Whitelaw has lost his franchise grab. Hoffman will veto the ordinances."

"He's here."

"Hoffman?"

"No, Mr. Whitelaw."

"He is? Where?"

"I think he's in the chief's private office. At least Mr. Warren was looking for Mr. Maynard a moment ago. He said Mr. Whitelaw had come. A Mr. Shanley and, I think, a Mr. O'Hearn are with him."

"Sort of consultation and consolation party, eh?"

"And you did it, Dick," she said, coming toward him with shining eyes.

"No—the people."

"But you led them—showed them how."

"Glad, Mary?"

"Glad, and oh so proud for you, Dick!"

"But the cause, the principle, don't you ever think of that?"

"Oh, I'm a woman. I don't know anything about it, Dick. I'm terribly ignorant about politics, franchises, labor and capital and all that sort of thing. But you——"

"Yes?"

"You've won. And that's a lot for those who are fond of you. You've been the one consolation since I've been working, worth——"

She suddenly paused and seated herself at one of the desks. For a moment she turned away her head and leaned her flushed face on her hand. She hadn't meant to say so much. Would he think her unwomanly? The reaction after the wear and excitement of the day had set in. She felt herself on the verge of tears.

"I'm glad to hear it," he said gently.

Once more she had the feeling that his voice caressed her, as it had done once before on the day of their first memorable dinner. But to-night there was a new note of tenderness. Her ears were hungry for it. Was it coming now? The dreaded, the Supreme Moment? She flushed to the roots of her hair. For a moment a wild desire to gain time came over her.

“Of course——” she began.

But he gently interrupted her.

“I’m glad to hear it,” he repeated. “I hope it won’t be long before you can leave this job.”

“Why?”

“It’s only right that you should. God knows newspaper work is bad enough for a man. It must be awful for a gentlewoman. Underpaid, overworked, and at any moment asked to wade knee-deep in the nasty muck and mire of scandal and crime and all the sordid wretchedness that makes news.”

“But you’ve come out of it big and strong and fine, Dick.”

“No, dear girl, not altogether.”

He seated himself on the desk where he could look down at her lovely, flushed face and clear, candid eyes.

“Before you came I didn’t pay much attention to the better things of life. I was pretty careless, pretty reckless.”

Mary covered his hand with hers for a moment.

“I know. But it’s over now, all that.”

“I think so. Why, I remember so well the first night I saw you, as you were coming out of the little restaurant. Do you recall it? Perhaps I shouldn’t mention it. I fear I wasn’t—well, really, quite presentable. And then, it was several days afterward that I first saw you come into this very office. I was at that desk, over there. You just bowed to me. Naturally, you did nothing else. You didn’t know me then, nor for a long time after. But that day, for the first time, I heard your voice. You weren’t even talking to me, but it seemed like it was my chance, that the moment had come when I must either keep on going down or begin a battle for right. Ever since, whatever I have tried to do, it’s been you who has kept me firm and determined.”

“I’m so happy to hear you say that, Dick. I’m so happy to hear you say that.”

“Since then I’ve learned the truth. And sometimes, when I’ve looked into your eyes,

I have wanted to ask a question, the question. But I knew that the time hadn't come for it."

His voice had grown husky with its earnestness. There was no trace of intoxication left. A strong emotion had sobered him. Mary had risen to her feet. She was trembling so that she could hardly stand. But her eyes looked clearly and frankly into his.

"I knew," he went on, "that I had to square myself with myself, that I had to do something worth while and prove that I had given up the old ways before I could honestly, decently, ask it of you."

Again he paused. And, for a moment, the silence between them was unbroken.

"Maybe you don't understand all this. I wonder if you do?"

"I do understand you, Dick. And when the time comes to ask me that question, I'll be waiting for you, and I'll answer it just as you want me to, just as you want me to."

She sank into her chair and buried her face in her hands.

"Mary," he said huskily. His hand smoothed her hair. He let her have her cry out. After a moment, Mary looked up and smiled at him through her tears.

"Dick," she said, her hand on his arm,

"there must always be perfect frankness and truth between us."

"I promise."

"And I trust you, Dick, because—because I love you. If my faith in you ever faltered I should feel as if everything were slipping away from me. You'll do nothing to destroy my trust, will you, dear?"

"I intend to win out and make you proud and glad."

"I know you will. But, Dick——"

"What, dear?"

"I want you to promise me one thing. Give up the drink. You know that to one of your temperament it spells ruin."

"I have promised myself that already. And now I promise you. To-day, you know, I've been under a good deal of a strain. There was the excitement, and all the boys. Well——" he added with a wry smile, "I must admit that I got off the wagon just long enough to pick up the whip. But to-morrow I shall go back on that sprinkling cart and sit plumb next to the driver for the rest of my natural life."

Mary's smile was happy.

"Good. And now, don't you think it's about time——?!"

She pointed to the clock.

"Goodness," laughed Dick, "I can hear the milk wagons."

"I'll run right up and get my hat and jacket." She paused at the door a moment and shyly blew him a kiss.

Whistling softly to himself, Wells went to the window and, leaning out, let the cool night air blow upon his heated face. He was very nearly completely sober now, at least he had himself in perfect control. But he realized that the excitement of the day, together with the liquor he had consumed, was still in his brain. It needed but a touch to set him once more on fire. Absorbed in the thoughts of his victory as he was, for a moment he gave himself up to the softer mood induced by Mary's tacit confession. He permitted himself to build a delightful castle in the air, a castle which had Mary for mistress. Occupied with these dreams he was only vaguely aware of voices in excited discussion, which came to him from the adjoining room. Had he been more alert he might have heard something which would have saved him the keenest anguish that the future was to hold for him.

It was just at that moment that Maynard,

profuse in apologies, had joined the three men awaiting him so long.

"Here's the editorial, Mr. Whitelaw. Again let me say how sorry I am to have kept you waiting. Pretty near a clean sweep, wasn't it?" he said with his wry smile, turning to Shanley and O'Hearn.

"Pretty near!" said Shanley savagely, "it was."

"Talk about gettin' stung," said O'Hearn in a high falsetto, "they stung us and left the stinger in."

"We've got a clean majority in the Council though."

But Shanley refused to be consoled.

"Hell! Yes. But we needed the Mayor to win on the Republican ticket. He never had a chance."

"That seems to cover the situation with caution and dignity," interrupted Whitelaw, handing the copy back to Maynard. "It's all right."

"I'll release it," said Maynard. He hurried to the speaking tube and whistled violently. "That editorial's all right. Tell Warren to let the page go and hurry the rest. You hear? Hurry."

"I'm awful sorry we've lost, Mr. White-

law. It was just one of those landslides. The people must be crazy."

Whitelaw selected a cigar from his case with some care. "And it was for the precise reason that we didn't want them to go crazy that we bought this paper," he said dryly.

"I don't know of anything that was left undone," said Maynard in a surly tone.

For a moment there was a gleam in Whitelaw's cold eye. "You should never have let that young fanatic Wells out of your employ. I told you so at the time. He's beaten us out."

"How beaten you out?"

"Tell him, John," said Whitelaw.

"Well," said Shanley, "there never was a campaign so sewed up as this. Not since I was in politics."

"You couldn't beat it," piped O'Hearn.

"Jim, here," said Shanley, indicating Mr. O'Hearn, "had the Democrats right in line from soup to nuts. And I had the Republicans. There was only this independent ticket, with its Committee of Seventy, against us."

"Well?"

"Well," said Shanley, rising and pacing up and down the small room, "they came into the field to-day with the completest organiza-

tion I ever saw. They knew every move we made and they beat us to it. Over in the shipyards, in Polack town, in the East Side, all over, we sure were up against it. They challenged every repeater, every damned one. And they knew the law. Every judge, every watcher, every teller they had, had a complete set of instructions. The greatest ever! Short, and to the point. They couldn't go wrong. Every precinct we colonized they knew and they had the names. I tell you, there was a man back of that Committee of Seventy who knew his business."

"He knew ours, too," said O'Hearn.

"Who was this man?" said Maynard.

"They say it was Wells," said Whitelaw with the same air of suppressed vindictiveness that had marked his speech to Maynard throughout the evening.

"Absurd!" blustered Maynard, "Dick Wells talks a lot, but he never does anything. He's unreliable and lazy and dissipated. I never was so stuck on his newspaper work even."

"You have the consolation of being alone in your opinion," said Whitelaw. "But now, look here," he added, "don't let's waste any more time crying over spilt milk. The point

now is how to jam these two franchises through the Council. We've got to get at Mayor Hoffman and we can't wait."

"Ordinarily, it wouldn't be a hard job," said Shanley.

"He's a regular sucker," said O'Hearn.

"Yes," said Shanley, "if it was Hoffman alone, he'd be easy. All this posin' for the people on his part is damned rot. He's a grafter at heart."

"Does he ever speculate?" said Whitelaw eagerly.

"Does he!" sneered Shanley.

"Then get him. You've got everything you need. Banks, police, courts, everything. But he must be made to sign those ordinances. We'll jam it through the Council with a majority of four or more. Now, gentlemen," he said, rising, "it appears to me it's up to you."

"What's the limit?" said Shanley.

"The sky, if necessary," said Whitelaw with a sinister smile. "Now, Maynard," he said, turning sharply on the crestfallen Managing Editor, "prepare an editorial for the next issue to the effect that Mayor-elect Hoffman will not betray the city to the evils of Socialism, Anarchy and—oh, you know, all

that sort of thing. The usual line of Public Safety argument."

As Maynard seated himself at the desk and began hurriedly to write according to his instructions, the sound of excited voices, one which he thought he recognized, clearly dominating, came to Whitelaw's ears from the room outside. As it happened, Mary had found upon her desk an order which she had overlooked, consequently, tired as she was, knowing that Dick would not mind a delay, she sat down and began to write hurriedly. In the meantime, Warren, the City Editor, had broken in upon Dick's meditations by slapping him upon the back.

"Hullo, old man. Waiting for Miss Calvert?"

"Yep."

"How goes it?"

"We beat y'u."

"You sure did!"

"We beat y'u to a standstill."

"Now, Dick, did you come over here to gloat?"

"Carried the city by two thousand," went on Dick, exultingly, "and those dear old franchises are up in smoke. And we almost got the Council. And the chief of all the crooks,

in there," he said, nodding toward Maynard's office.

"Hush, he'll hear you," said Warren.

"I want him to hear me," said Wells. He purposely raised his voice. "You're beaten, you understand? You tried to steal the city's streets and the city's gas. You've been called. The bluff didn't go."

"Damn it all, you must be drunk or crazy."

"All right. But don't forget you're all to the bad."

"Go home, I tell you. You must be drunk. Besides, you're barred from here."

"Oh, I know all that," laughed Wells. "I knew it when the returns came in."

At that moment Shanley, O'Hearn and Maynard, with Whitelaw at their head, appeared at the door.

"There's Wells," sneered Maynard. "And loaded to the muzzle."

"Just the man I want to see," said Whitelaw.

"How do you do, Mr. Whitelaw," called Wells. He saluted ironically, his hat well on the back of his head.

"How do you do, Mr. Wells? Been celebrating?" said Whitelaw suavely.

"Oh, just a little bit. Hullo! O'Hearn.

And there's old John Shanley. You're looking just a bit down in the mouth, John. Lord, how we walloped you."

"You! Ah, behave yourself," spluttered O'Hearn.

"Just a minute, Jim," said Whitelaw, smoothly. "So you're one of Mr. Hoffman's friends?"

"Y-e-s. In this campaign you might say I'm the real thing."

"Very interesting."

"So was the result."

"Exceedingly. You figured in it, Mr. Wells, I believe?"

"In an humble capacity, Mr. Whitelaw."

"Oh, I'm sure you're too modest," said Whitelaw with a suggestion of a sneer.

"I wouldn't sneer if I were you, Whitelaw," said Wells with rising temper.

"Mr. Whitelaw. D'yous understand? Mr. Whitelaw," broke in Maynard, with his air of swaggering authority.

"No. Just plain Whitelaw to me. I won't address a thief, even a political one, as Mister."

"You shut up," said Shanley, advancing with clenched fists.

"Oh, let him alone," said Whitelaw. "He's drunk."

"I am drunk. Drunk with success. Now listen to me. Ask those two ward heelers, graduated into fat corporation jobs, what took them off their feet to-day. They'll tell you it was the organization of the Independents. They'll confess that every move your rotten committee made we knew about beforehand."

Once more Shanley started forward with a violent imprecation.

Whitelaw held up a restraining hand.  
"Wait. Let him talk. I like to hear him."

"Let me talk, indeed. I'm not afraid of your political crooks. You can thank me for your defeat. Me, do you understand? Every time you tried to poll a repeater we stopped you, didn't we? Then you rallied the Democrats and tried to throw the vote to the Republicans and we euchred you, didn't we? And I did it. I organized that Committee of Seventy. I directed the campaign and you couldn't find out who it was."

In his rising excitement Wells had thrown his hat upon a desk. Unconsciously he assumed the attitude of an orator. He stood at bay, his face to the enemy. At that moment

Mary appeared at the door. For an instant she felt a thrill of terror. It looked almost as if it must come to blows. As it happened, Harry Day at the same moment had come up from the press room. He took in the situation at a glance and, hurrying over to Mary's side, he led her swiftly across the room to Maynard's office, following her in.

"Oh, Mr. Day, what has happened?" said Mary in distress.

"Nothing has happened as yet," said Day. "But I'm just a little afraid of trouble. Dick isn't afraid of anything, when he gets started. But don't you worry, I'll take care of you."

"You're a damn sneak," said Shanley. He had been gathering wrath during the pause.

"Your names don't hurt, John Shanley, your record is full of mud, filth and the blood of honest men. And as for you"—he turned with sudden fury upon Whitelaw—"I've watched you for years. You've robbed and kicked the people long enough. I know how you've gripped the throat of each party and managed campaigns from your office for your own good and your own dishonest advantage. How you've robbed, connived, bribed and coerced every Council and every Mayor to boost your own bank account and

that of the other criminals with whom you've done business. I know how you've broken labor unions and then, after you had got them under your control, with the aid of these two stool pigeons, how you've cut wages, sent hunger into homes and forced mere babies to leave school and slave in the shops and stores and offices. But now—now you've tried to perpetrate these two gigantic steals on us, these ninety-nine-year franchises. You're beaten. Salute me, Dick Wells, good-for-nothing, the ne'er-do-well, the drunkard, fanatic, idealist, anything you like. I've licked you once and I'll lick you again."

At this moment a loud shout was heard from the street below and above the din of tin horns and voices came the sound of an approaching band. It was evidently a triumphal procession. Maynard seized this opportunity to escape.

"Come on, Mr. Whitelaw," he said. "We can get out the back way and not have to run into that crowd of damn fools."

"Please go on. Tell it all," said Whitelaw, paying no attention to Maynard.

"And as for you," said Wells, turning on Maynard, "you wanted to hire me for thirty dollars a week to work on your rotten sheet,

not as a decent reporter, but as a spy, a spy, do you hear me? You knew that all my friends were in the Independent League and you wanted me to work the double cross on them for your dirty money. And I wouldn't. Instead of working the double cross on them, I've worked the triple cross on you. You hear that racket out there? That's the people, the real people. They're going to take away your railroads and your gas company, since you've robbed them of their streets and their bread. You're beaten, Whitelaw, damn you, you're beaten. Wait, I'll show you."

Before any one could anticipate his action, he had picked up a chair and dashed it against the large window of the office. It needed but a few good blows to shatter the entire window. He leaned far out through the broken sash. At his appearance a frantic shout came up from the street below. For a moment Whitelaw stepped back a pace in fear as Mary, breaking away from Day's restraining hand, rushed into the room. But at the sight that met her eyes she stopped in fascinated silence. Wells held up his hand and the cheering suddenly died.

"Boys," he called, "we've won. We've called the bluff. I want you to say good-by

to the *Globe*. A lot of you don't know me——”

“Sure we do, sure we do!” came a vast shout from the street.

“——All right. But those who don't can ask the others. To-morrow I want you to come down and see this building draped in mourning for the dead and departed franchise grabs. And now, good night.”

Once more there was a great shouting from the street below and then the procession, headed by the band, went on its way. Wells remained for a moment, watching until they had turned the corner. As he stepped back into the office he saw Whitelaw standing where he had left him.

“And now, Mister Whitelaw,” he began, but seeing Mary's troubled face, he stopped.

“Why, Dick—I——”

“Oh, are you ready, Mary?”

“Why, yes. Are you coming?”

“Certainly. You'll excuse me, gentlemen.”

He bowed once more ironically to Whitelaw, and taking Mary's arm through his own, went slowly down the stairway.

## CHAPTER X.

Mary slept late on the morning following election. There was fortunately no reason why she should rise early, as to-day she was not needed at the office before one. So she made up her mind for once to be self-indulgent and have breakfast in bed. The landlady was not the sort of person who, generally speaking, encouraged luxurious habits. She was the type that always alluded to one who slept late as "lyin' in bed." Mary, who certainly thought that her late working hours entitled her to a little longer sleep in the morning than the ordinary working woman, whose day is over by the dinner hour, found herself foolishly irritated at Alice's laughing report of Mrs. Gridges' speech one morning when she called.

"I'm sure I don't mind you goin' up to see for yourself, not a bit of it. But Miss Calvert, while a lady every inch of her, has a great habit of lyin' in bed till all sorts of hours. Yes, I suppose she has to do her work at night sometimes, but I'm an old-fashioned

body and was brought up myself to get up when other folks does."

"Why in the name of common sense can't she say I sleep late?" said Mary irritably, when this speech was reported to her. "That does not sound particularly dissolute, but 'Lyin' in bed!' It somehow suggests inertia carried to the point of immorality."

On this particular morning, however, Mrs. Gridges had not only consented to tea and toast going up to Mary's small room, but had even gone to the extraordinary length of carrying it up herself. What had so deeply stirred the depths of her better nature? Mary was at a loss to imagine. But shortly after Mrs. Gridges had subsided into the depths of the Morris chair—a private extravagance on the part of her lodger—and had been allowed sufficient time to recover her breath, the secret spring of her action bubbled forth.

"Guess who came to see you this mornin'? Ever so early? Two of your gentlemen friends. Of course, I told them that you'd been out late and wasn't seein' callers. And of all things, what do you suppose they said? That they knew you had. I was that surprised, at one of them at least, you'd never

guess if I sat here till the crack o' doom who one of the gentlemen was. You might the other one. He's the young gentleman who walks home with you often nights. I think he works on your paper."

"It might be Mr. Wells or Mr. Day. I think that completes the long list of the admirers who keep the same dissipated hours I do," said Mary with a laugh.

"It was the good-lookin' one," said Mrs. Gridges in no uncertain tone.

"And who was the other?"

"Well, you'd never guess in this world. Mr. Horace Whitelaw."

"Mr. Whitelaw? No, I don't think I should have guessed him. At least, not for some time. Did he want anything in particular? Did he leave any message, I mean?"

"Yes, he left a letter, which, I think he said, was from his daughter. Land's sake, I never thought to bring it along."

"Oh, well, I dare say it will keep till you go down again. If you will send Lizzie up with it then it will do perfectly well," said Mary good naturedly.

Hints passed over Mrs. Gridges' head so completely that she didn't need to dodge. She sat placidly and watched Mary in the act

of crunching the exceedingly thin dry toast  
she had made with her own hands.

"It seems strange that a man rich and youngish and not bad lookin' should stay single so long," said Mrs. Gridges with the air of one who advances a novel but irrefutable proposition, but who is nevertheless graciously inclined to listen to argument on the other side.

"Rich?" said Mary. "Why, he hasn't a penny to bless himself with. Fortunately he is young enough to make his way yet."

"I wasn't speakin' of him," retorted Mrs. Gridges triumphantly, "I was speakin' of Mr. Whitelaw."

"But he has been a widower for ever so many years."

"Men have been known to marry again. Any amount of 'em. In fact they most always do," said Mrs. Gridges oracularly. "I was Gridges' third. I'm glad we opened this subject, Miss Calvert. You know I'm just as interested in you as if you were my very own daughter, and my advice to you is, don't look to just the handsome part of a man. Looks can't get the necessaries," she wagged a solemn forefinger. "In your place I'd take Mr. Whitelaw."

"Why, Mrs. Gridges. Whatever are you talking about?" Mary was divided between a wild desire to laugh and a very real annoyance. She ended by laughing.

Mrs. Gridges rose with difficulty and dignity.

"The day may come when you'll remember that I tried honestly to give you a little friendly advice," she began.

"But Mr. Whitelaw looks on me only as the child of an old friend. Why, he thinks of me as he does of Alice, as a chit of a girl. Really you're quite mistaken."

"I have my eyes and I have my ears," retorted Mrs. Gridges majestically as she waddled from the room.

Mary was left to complete her repast and chew the cud of reflection. "What a perfectly ridiculous old woman."

It was but a few moments later that a light tap at the door and a gay, bright voice, demanding entrance, announced the arrival of Alice Whitelaw. As she came into the room she tore a note into small bits and threw them into the waste basket.

"It's all right, don't be alarmed. It's only my note, the one I wrote you early this morning to tell you I was coming. Father told me

that you had been detained very late at the office, so I knew you'd be having a beauty sleep. But as I wanted to catch you before you left the house, I wrote to tell you to wait for me. It seems that I might have saved myself the trouble, as I saw my unmistakable handwriting on an envelope lying on the hat rack as I came in. Oh, you lucky girl, how I wish I had enough hair to wear two braids like that. You look too sweet for anything."

She leaned over and kissed Mary lightly.

"I'm awfully glad you came. I have been terribly lazy, I must confess. But, you see, to-day I don't have to get to the office till one o'clock."

"Why go to the office at all?" said Alice abruptly.

A wave of crimson swept Mary's face to the roots of her hair. Once more she felt a wild desire to burst into laughter. She was piously grateful to Mrs. Gridges for having betaken herself to the regions below stairs. Coming on top of that lady's Delphic utterances as to her having eyes and ears, Alice's question was disconcerting. And what did it mean? Had Mrs. Gridges heard it, she surely would have regarded it as proof

of Holy Writ that there was 'an understanding between Mr. Whitelaw and herself.

"Why go to the office at all?" repeated Alice.

She smiled her gay little smile into Mary's perturbed face.

"Now, look here. I have come down this morning on a most particular errand. It's all a scheme of Aunty's and mine. Of course, Father has been consulted, and he thinks it one of the finest ideas I have had—oh, in ever so long. You know Aunt Emma has the Society Leader Bee so badly she'll never be herself again. Consequently she has decided that, with her delicate health, which is of course all bosh, she cannot go on without a private secretary. The real reason, between you and me, is that her dearest friend Mrs. De Forest has one. Of course, no Society Leader can be outshone in any such fashion. So a private secretary Aunt Em must have. Now since Father and I have to live in the same house with this new addition, we naturally want some one who will be at least agreeable to us. I let Aunty flounder about for a day or two. As a matter of fact she is at her wits' end trying to imagine whom she could get. Then, at the psychological

moment, I appeared, metaphorically speaking, through a trapdoor in the drawing room, like the Good Fairy in a pantomime. ‘Lady,’ said I, ‘I am your Fairy Godmother. You wish to know some one for a private secretary. Mary Calvert is the name.’ Well, Aunty was perfectly delighted. She met my suggestion with the greatest enthusiasm. We consulted Father yesterday. He approves most thoroughly. The only thing that we all feel at sea about is the horrid question of salary. Father said he hadn’t the faintest notion what the private secretary to a society leader could command. Aunt Emma, of course, would like to pay a little more than Mrs. De Forest does. But there’s no way of finding out what she does pay. And, of course, to ask her would be to confess that we didn’t know what was appropriate. So it all ended by Father’s suggesting that Aunt Emma offer you for the present a hundred dollars a month. There isn’t really very much work and if there is, we can do it together. We’re sure to have oceans of time to do all sorts of bully things. Of course, you’d come and live at the house. You can have the room next to mine. The paper on the wall is perfectly horrid, but Father says we can have it all

done over. I love to fuss and plan about a room, don't you?"

"I've never had much experience in that line," said Mary.

"Well, you can begin right off. And I will place my abysmal experience at your service without extra charge. Come, what do you say to the plan?"

"Oh, Alice, my dear! Give me time to breathe, to take it all in. It sounds too perfectly lovely to be at all real. And then, the money—you see, after all I am a sordid soul! Why, I never had anything like so much money in my whole life. But I must have time to consider it from all sides. I must admit that I am beginning to be awfully fond of my newspaper work."

"There's not a thing in the world to prevent your doing as many special articles as your heart may desire. Think of the time you will have on your hands. Do you reflect that Aunty never appears until noon? That nights, when she's not giddy-gadding, she falls asleep almost immediately after dinner? That two nights a week are devoted to the manicure and the masseuse? Why, you will have more time than you ever did in all your born days."

"Still, I must have at least the rest of the day to think it all over," pleaded Mary. "One can't come to such an important decision all in a second."

Alice's eyes narrowed suddenly. For the moment the resemblance to her father was both novel and startling.

"Are you quite candid? Don't you really mean that there is a certain person you would like to consult?"

"Who should there be?"

"Who, indeed? It is I who am asking you."

"You are quite wrong. I shall decide the matter entirely by myself," said Mary. But she could not hide her rising color from Alice's keen eyes.

She was perfectly sincere. She did intend to decide the matter for herself, by herself. But there was a certain mental reservation in favor of submitting her decision to Richard's approval. Surely after what had passed between them, that was only his due. He had expressed the wish that she might be freed from the drudgery of her work. He, himself, was not able to take care of her as yet. Surely he would rejoice with her that this opportunity had come. And yet, and yet——

Perhaps Mary was not quite disingenuous after all.

Alice left her presently. Even that impetuous young lady was compelled to admit that Mary must present herself at the office at least once more for the purpose of tendering her resignation. It was a formality, but it must be observed. She had hardly reached the street before Mary had slipped into a dressing gown and seated herself at the tiny desk. She wrote hurriedly, pausing now and again in her rapid progress across the page to search for the more cautious word.

"Dearest and Best,

"The most astonishing thing has happened. You never could guess, so don't frown so. Miss Whitelaw, Mr. Whitelaw's sister, has offered me the position of her private secretary at the unbelievable salary of one hundred dollars a month. And I am to live at the Whitelaws! Did you ever hear of such a thing? Of course, I know that you and Mr. Whitelaw are at daggers drawn. But even so, think of how much money I could save against—well, against the day that we both dream of. Then too, you must remember that never by word or glance have any of the family even suggested that

they did not admire you as much as every one else does. Of course, after last night—really dear, weren't you unnecessarily violent? I loved you for it just the same, even though I was terribly frightened. But it was splendid, the way you stood up and defied all those men. And when the crowd from the street cheered! Ah, that was something to remember all one's life. But they are all too well bred ever to attack you before me. I don't suppose they even suspect how far things have gone between us. But they know how I admire you, for I have told them, particularly Alice, over and over again. It seems such a splendid opportunity. And then, I must confess I love soft living and all that sort of thing; although it is not at all necessary. Heaven knows I have done without it all my life. But that I like the taste of it I don't deny. Never fear that it will grow upon me. I come of people that have been only well-to-do, at best, for generations. It must have been some long-forgotten ancestress who had a luxury-loving soul. So, while I do long to try it for a little while, when the hour comes when you are ready for me, I shall come to you just as gladly and we will, if necessary, toil together. I am sending this

by the youth of all chores. I am hoping to have you telephone me or leave me a line at the office, where I am going, subject to your approval, to make my adieux.

“With love,

“MARY.”

Mary dispatched the letter to Richard’s house and, having made a leisurely toilet, went to the office. For over an hour she pottered about on one pretext or another. But there was no message from Dick. The afternoon was a dull one. Election returns were still the absorbing topics for the *Globe* readers, it appeared. So Mary found it easy to return home after a short time. No one had left a message of any sort. She felt that she must know her lover’s mind on the all-important subject. She had never but the once been further than the gate of his lodgings. But it would be comparatively easy to become the bearer of a fancied message from some one on the staff.

She made her way toward the house where Wells had lived for several years. On the way she encountered the blooming Miss Simpson.

“Why, how-de-do, dear. I haven’t seen you to do more than nod to for days and

days. Guess who I just ran into, oh, an hour or more ago? Mr. Wells. My stars, but he was in a hurry. He nearly knocked me down as I was turning the corner at Smythe's. His grip was only half shut, it was so full. Off in a great hurry till the end of the week, he told me. We had only time for the shortest chat."

So he had gone without a word. Surely, in the few moments devoted to chatting with Miss Simpson he might have managed to send a wire. Poor Mary! She hurried to the office of the *Globe* once more. Without a word to any one, she wrote out her resignation, explaining fully that she had accepted the position of private secretary to Miss Whitelaw. On her way home she went boldly to Richard's lodgings and, having recalled herself to his landlady, whom she had seen once before, asked for the note she had sent at noon on the plea that she wished to forward it. Once out of sight of the house, she tore it into a thousand pieces and scattered it to the four winds of heaven.

## CHAPTER XI.

It was only three weeks since election, but it seemed as if an entire lifetime had passed since that eventful day. There had been so much to do before Mary was finally settled in her new home. While nominally her duties had begun with her arrival, as a matter of fact, Alice had insisted that the real business of life must be attended to first. The real business of life was, of course, the repapering and refurnishing of Mary's new room. To shop with Alice was like possessing the lamp of Aladdin. It never occurred to her to inquire the price of anything. Her only embarrassment was that of selection. It was in vain that Mary protested; Alice had the bit in her teeth, in the shape of carte blanche from her father. She seemed determined to make Mary's room the prettiest in the house.

"All I can say," said Mary in futile protest, "is that I anticipate some day being sent to jail for life myself; after going shopping with you I shall, in pure absence of mind, follow your extravagant methods; then,

when my creditors descend on me, I shall be arrested for obtaining goods under false pretenses."

On this particular morning Alice was all excitement, and, as for Kate Emerson, who was once more her guest, she was even more exclamatory and giggly than in her normal condition. The particular occasion was the laying of the cornerstone for the new Refuge for Homeless Working Girls, which was to take place in the afternoon. To this worthy charity Horace Whitelaw had contributed a check magnificent even for him, and for once, doubtless for some shrewd reason of his own, he had permitted the news of his donation to be bruited abroad. He was to preside at the ceremony. There was to be a procession of the United Charities Societies, the school children, the inmates of the Orphans' Home and kindred institutions, to which, as in all small towns, was added, as a matter of course, the Volunteer Fire Department.

The girls had been busy all morning decorating the house with flags and flowers. Great masses of potted chrysanthemums adorned the balconies facing the avenue.

They were temporarily resting from their labors in the library. Alice and Kate Emer-

son were having a lively conversation as to which of two of their acquaintances would make the best showing on horseback in the procession in the afternoon. Mary was seated in Mr. Whitelaw's chair at the desk. She was absorbed in her own thoughts. A close observer might have noted that a subtle change had taken place in her face since she had left the *Globe*. There were times when, in repose, she had a new expression of weary sadness which, without making her look absolutely older, gave one the impression that a certain youthful buoyancy was missing.

"I beg your pardon, Miss Calvert," said a neat parlor maid, appearing at the door.

"What is it, Josephine?"

"Mr. Wells called you up a moment ago on the telephone. I thought you were out, Miss, so I took the message."

"Then he's home." Mary's voice, even to her own ear, had a startled intonation.

"Yes, Miss. He said he'd just arrived and that he'd come up to see you as soon as possible."

"Come here!"

"Yes, Miss. Is that all?"

"Yes thank you." She rose from her seat and went over to the window for the moment.

She saw Alice and Kate exchange a meaning glance. Do what she could, she could not for the moment control her agitation. During all these weeks she had resolutely put the thought of Dick out of her mind as far as possible. If, in the watches of the night, the thought of him would obtrude itself, that was beyond her strength to combat. She had gone over it, it seemed to her, from every aspect. Now she bitterly blamed him for leaving her without a word, without a line. Again, she upbraided herself for having taken so momentous a step without consulting him or at least notifying him. It would have been the simplest thing in the world to have gotten his address from Harry Day, but her pride and—yes, she admitted it—her jealousy, her foolish, wicked jealousy, which was spoiling things for them both, had prevented it. And now he had returned; and purposed coming to see her in the house of his enemy. That must hurt his pride. How had he learned she was here? Oh, he mustn't come. And yet she lacked the strength to prevent it. His name had never once been mentioned by either Alice or her father, but Mary had seen in the papers of his bitter denunciation of Mr. Whitelaw and his methods at the Independent

Conventions in St. Louis and Chicago. For the moment she forgot Kate Emerson's presence and turned her agitated face to Alice.

"Will it be all right, Alice?"

"What, Mary?"

"To have Mr. Wells call here?"

"Why not?"

"But your father?"

"He won't care."

"Won't care? After election night? And the scene at the *Globe* office?"

"Oh," said Kate Emerson, with an ecstatic giggle, "it was so exciting. Perfectly delicious."

Alice reproved Kate with a glance and, going over, laid her hand on her friend's arm. "Don't worry, old girl, I'll fix it with Father. You know he never mixes up his politics or business with his home."

"Oh, I know, I know. But the things he said at those conventions."

"Don't worry," repeated Alice. "Oh, here he is now," she said, glancing out of the window.

"Who? Dick? I mean Mr. Wells."

"No, goosey. Father."

She ran to the door to greet her father as

he entered. She cut him short in his pleasant greeting.

"Mary, you and Kate go into the other room, will you? I want to talk to Father about something very important."

"Important?" said her father, with a gesture of mock terror. "I know what that means. Well, how much?"

"It isn't money, you old goosey."

"Well, then," said her father, "I can spare you a little time, but don't take too long. I have several important engagements."

"Father," said Alice seriously, "it's about Mary."

"Well?"

"When you wanted her to come here as Aunty's private secretary, away from the *Globe*, you said that you personally didn't want to appear in the matter."

"That is true."

"That's just the way I put it to her, that it was my idea and that you simply consented."

"Well? She's been here three weeks. Your Aunt is perfectly delighted, so what's the matter?"

"Well, nothing really serious."

"Is she unhappy?"

"Oh, no. But—"

"But what, my dear?"

"Father," said Alice, coming over and sitting on the arm of his chair, her arm about his neck, "you know I think Mary is almost perfect. There's just one thing—"

"And what is that?"

"She seems to be interested in Richard Wells."

"Oh indeed," said her father with a mocking smile. "My dear Alice, I'll tell you a piece of news in exchange. Queen Anne is dead."

Alice gave him an impatient shake. "She even admires him," she said.

"So do I. I think she has taste."

"You admire him?"

"Yes, as I admire any brilliant young man."

"Father Whitelaw! He says awful things about you!"

"My dear, he's young. All young people talk too much."

"Mr. Wells came home to-day."

"I know it. He reached town at precisely 11:53."

"He's coming up here to see Mary. Now

that you didn't know. That is, of course, if you don't object."

"Quite the contrary. It will give me a chance to see him myself."

"What on earth do you want to see him for?"'

"Never you mind. Now you send Mary here. I want to talk to her a minute."

"You're sure you're not provoked."

"I tell you I'm glad."

"I'll call her."

"One moment," said her father, as she ran toward the door. "Is she very, very deeply interested in him?"'

"I'm sure she is."

"Is she—in love with him?"'

"I'm almost certain of it."

"Do you think she has much influence over him?"'

"Of course, if he's in love with her."

"You speak with all the conviction of experience," he smiled. "Well, run along now." As Alice left the room he touched the bell. "Williams," he said to the butler, who appeared almost upon the instant, "when Mr. Shanley and Mr. O'Hearn come don't show them in here until I ring this button twice. You understand?"'

"Yes, sir."

"If Mary can persuade him, or I can persuade him through Mary to do what I wish, the greatest obstacle will be removed," said Whitelaw to himself. He seated himself at his desk and affected to be busy with some writing as Mary came in.

"Well, young woman," he said, looking up after a moment, "I hear you've been worrying your foolish head over a perfectly simple matter. I mean about young Wells coming out to see you. Instead of objecting I'm glad, very glad he's coming. You see, as it happens, I'd like to have a chance to have a bit of a talk with him myself."

"You want to talk to Dick?"

"And why not, pray? Surely the fact that we happen to hold opposite opinions about some matters does not preclude the idea of our having a friendly talk upon other subjects, does it? Politics is one thing, personal relations are another. Oh, I know that your friend Wells has some pretty radical ideas. Tell me, has he succeeded in making a convert of you?"

"I don't know what to think," said Mary ruefully, "I'm not used to any of your ideas up here; it seems sometimes that I never hear

any good of any one any more. Every one seems to distrust every one else. I am learning that there is more than one code of honor."

"No, I shouldn't say that; let us phrase it differently. Here, in this busy world, a man lives in two separate departments of life. On the one side is his private life, on the other his business and public life. The first covers all that pertains to one's sweetheart, one's wife, one's children, religion, the duty to one's neighbor and all that sort of thing. The second—well, business is business, Miss Calvert."

"But which is the make-believe, the sincere, the true? The private or the business life?"

"I think I know how you feel; that is the reason why I so heartily approved of Alice's plan to take you away from the newspaper. It isn't the place for a woman. I wanted you on the gentle, the better side, with Alice, with us."

"I am very thankful to you."

"And one thing more. Please consider always that this house is your home rather than a mere place of employment. And now," he said, more briskly, "will you tell

Mr. Wells when he calls how much I should like to see him?"

"Surely."

"Thank you. Now I'm going to send you back to the girls. I have, as usual, some tiresome business to attend to."

Everything was in train. The scheme outlined in Maynard's office on election night had worked to a charm. Hoffman's greed for gain had made him an easy victim. It was all so perfectly simple. O'Hara, one of the aldermen, a creature of Shanley, had persuaded the unfortunate man to sell short Traction only the day before. Then, with Whitelaw's manipulation, the market was bulled. He had lost everything and worse. On the desk before him lay the statement from the bank, showing that Hoffman had drawn seventy-five thousand dollars which he held as executor of an estate. That, too, had gone. He was completely at their mercy. There was only his fear of Wells to be reckoned with. And now, to-day, Whitelaw would see Wells. And he thought he had a pretty clear idea as to where Wells' weakness lay. He stepped to the bell and rang it sharply twice. A moment later Shanley appeared in the doorway.

“Where’s O’Hearn?”

“Gone for Probate Judge Wilson.”

“Good. Now, John, when Judge Wilson comes, let me do the talking. I want O’Hearn to see that Hoffman gets here alright and to keep his weather eye open. I’m expecting Richard Wells some time this afternoon and they mustn’t meet. Here comes the judge now,” he said, going to the window. “Suppose you go out now and give O’Hearn the tip and then come back. Good day, Judge. Good day, O’Hearn,” he called, opening the side door. “Just waive all ceremony, Judge, and come in this way.”

Judge Wilson was the typical country lawyer for whom politics had done much. He was a small man of some fifty odd years. He always wore a frock suit of broadcloth, which invariably continued to be the same general style and cut. Moreover, it always suggested that in another month it would become shiny, without ever quite doing so. He invariably wore, not one, but a series of buttonhole bouquets in the three upper buttonholes of his coat which he never fastened. It gave him the effect of having started a wreath and having been called away before he had had time to complete it. For the rest, he wore a

timid, deprecating air that a hard observer might have described as cringing.

"Well, Judge," said Whitelaw, with his automatic geniality, "I declare you grow younger every day. Sit down, sit down."

## CHAPTER XII.

"Sorry to have troubled you, Judge, to come over to me; but as I want to see you on a very private matter, it seemed better."

"No trouble at all, no trouble at all. Always at your service, Mr. Whitelaw."

"Very busy these days, Judge?"

"Yes, the docket is crowded, very crowded. I had hoped to take a trip to Europe this summer, but I guess I'll have to shave my vacation down to a month or six weeks of fishing."

"Oh, go to Europe, Judge. And, if there's too much work, the people must elect more judges."

"Sure thing," said Shanley, appearing in the door. "We'll have a bill passed by the next legislature."

"That's a mighty good suggestion, John," said the judge. "But what can I do for you, Mr. Whitelaw?"

"Judge, before you were elected to the bench, you were engaged as associate counsel of law for both the gas and the traction companies. In addition to a retaining fee of

five thousand dollars a year, you were, when each company reorganized, given a block of common and preferred stock, as an acknowledgment of your valuable services."

"That's true."

"Both the boards of directors ~~had~~ been of the opinion that, sooner or later, you'd tire of the bench and return to active practice. And, in consequence, you have continued to receive the yearly retainer of five thousand."

The judge shifted uneasily in his chair and moistened his dry lips nervously.

"Not that we expected any favors from you. Not at all."

"Furthest thing from our minds," broke in Shanley, with an attempt at lightness.

Whitelaw shot a reproving glance in Shanley's direction. "But simply," he went on, "that when you did return to active practice, the yearly payment of the retainer would give us the first call on your professional services."

"Of course, gentlemen. It was only on that tacit understanding that I could have accepted the retainer."

"Of course."

"Sure thing," said Shanley.

"Although I must admit that it comes in very handy," said the judge.

"Every little bit helps," said Shanley.

"Well, Judge," said Whitelaw, crossing to the desk to consult his memoranda, "eight months ago the will of Joseph Smith, deceased, was admitted to probate. He left his daughter, Beatrice, aged fourteen, everything, and appointed Augustus Hoffman sole executor and administrator of the estate."

"I remember the case perfectly. You mean Mayor Hoffman."

"Precisely. By the terms of the will, all property was to be converted into cash, with the exception of a block on Michigan Street. The money was to be invested in Lake Shore and New York Central bonds and the income from the bonds and the remaining real estate was to provide for the child's education until she became of age, when she was to come into full possession of her property. Do you recollect?" The judge nodded.

"The property brought something like seventy-five thousand dollars, which came into the possession of Mayor Hoffman as sole executor. He gave a bond of eighty-five thousand dollars, of a surety company, as demanded by the terms of the will."

"I remember the will explicitly because of that odd stipulation, demanding a surety company's bond."

"Now, Judge, if you received reliable information that that seventy-five thousand dollars had been embezzled and lost in speculation, you would call on the executor for a legal accounting, would you not?"

"I certainly would."

"And if this orphan's money was lost or—stolen, I mean, if you found such to be the case, you'd call on his bondsmen, wouldn't you?"

"Certainly."

"And if the executor still failed to make good the amount, he'd be—er——"

"He would very probably be sent to prison."

Whitelaw's manner became more earnest and his voice took on a deeper note. "But, Judge, if, at the same time that you learned of this defalcation, you were informed that certain friends of the Mayor, men of undoubted financial standing, would make the amount good, you'd consider the good name of the city and shield, as far as in your power, without in the least stultifying yourself, the honor of its Mayor, would you not?"

"I should always respect such an office as I do my own."

"Then we can depend upon you to act in just that way?"

"It is, as a matter of fact, exactly according to law."

Whitelaw rose and the judge, taking his cue that the interview was at an end, followed his example.

"I'm so much indebted to you, Judge, for having called."

"Thank you."

"And," said Whitelaw, "if you do conclude to go to Europe, I hope it won't be for a month or so."

"Oh, it will be all of that," said the judge, as he moved toward the door. On the threshold he encountered the amiable Mr. O'Hearn.

"Hoffman there?" said Shanley sharply.

"Yes," said O'Hearn, "and he's all in. He saw the judge through the window."

Whitelaw turned on him almost savagely. "I don't intend to appear in this personally. Don't mince words. Tell him it's jail or the approval of the franchises. If he balks on account of Wells, tell him that Wells has dickered with us, that he is willing that he should approve the ordinances, but doesn't

want anything to do directly with the Mayor, and that the whole deal is to be swung with Wells' knowledge and approval."

Once more he rang the bell. "Tell that young man from my office who's been waiting outside to come in," he said to the maid. "I want a stenographic record of this interview. It may be useful," he said in explanation.

The stenographer, a young man with a determined jaw and keen black eyes, followed almost upon the instant.

"You've been with our company about three years, haven't you?"

"Nearly four."

"I think you can be trusted. Could you recognize the voices of Mr. O'Hearn and Mr. Shanley here?"

"I am sure I could."

"Very well. Now sit down in this chair behind this screen here and take down every word of the interview you're about to hear. I want you to be able to swear to its correctness, if necessary."

"Very good, sir."

As Whitelaw left the room O'Hearn went to the door opening on the piazza. "Mr. Mayor," he called.

Augustus Hoffman stumbled on the thresh-

old. He was a tall man, not illy built, of a distinctly Teutonic type. His heavy face had a pasty look of ill-health, suggesting a man who ate and drank to excess and who never took any exercise. His clothes were unbrushed and creased. He was perspiring freely, although the day was far from warm. His face wore a look of extreme perturbation; he puffed as if he had been running. As he stood in the doorway he mopped his face with a dirty, crumpled handkerchief. His small eyes blinked at Shanley as if he found the light of the room too much for him.

"Hullo, Gus," said Shanley, "you look warm."

"Where's Mr. Whitelaw?" gasped Hoffman.

"Called away," said O'Hearn. "Guess we'll do, won't we?"

"Sit down, Gus," interrupted Shanley. "You look as if you had something on your mind," he added.

"Has O'Hearn told you?"

"Bad business, Gus. Bad business," said Shanley, with a portentous wag of his head.

Hoffman sat on the extreme edge of his

chair. He made a despairing gesture.  
“Judge Wilson has just been here; I saw him.”

“Oh, he—dropped in for a minute.”

“Does he know?”

“Really now, I couldn’t tell.”

Hoffman struck the table with violence.  
“Look here, Shanley,” he shouted, “I know you and you know me. You can’t fourflush with me. No, by God; I know the whole damn business.”

“Don’t get excited, Gus,” said Shanley.  
There was veiled menace in his tone.

Hoffman sprang to his feet and shook his fist in Shanley’s face. “I’ll make it hot for you before I get through with you, John Shanley. You put up that scheme with Alderman O’Hara to get me to sell short gas and traction stock. You gave him the money and then, when I put in my last dollar——”

“Your last dollar?”

“You bulled the market and broke me, broke me financially and every other way.”

“Well,” said O’Hearn, “you’re over twenty-one, ain’t you? You went and got your leg way over your head; now you’re blaming us.”

Hoffman sank into his chair. “It means

that I'm done, politically and every other way."

"You played the bucket shops, didn't you?"

Hoffman nodded.

"That's a fine thing for a true blue Socialist to do. You're a hell of a reformer, you are," barked O'Hearn.

"Well, you've got me. I know that. But what's to be done? That's what I want to know. What's to be done?" He was becoming hysterical.

"Wait a minute. And we're not deaf," said Shanley. "Now listen, Gus. I've talked to Mr. Whitelaw about this matter and he's all cut up about it."

"Oh, yes," said O'Hearn virtuously. "It makes him sick to think of the Mayor of this beautiful city being pinched for making too free with other people's money."

"He's a good friend to you, Gus," said Shanley. "He's willing to help you straighten this whole thing out and put you on your feet again under certain conditions."

"What conditions? I needn't ask. You mean for me to approve those franchises. Well, you needn't say it. I can't."

"You can't!"

"No, you've forgotten Wells."

"Is he Mayor? I knew he'd called you his man, Friday."

"It's a lie."

"I leave it to Jim. And I think he said also Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday and likewise holidays," laughed Shanley.

"Why, if I were to sign those ordinances Wells would have me driven out of town."

"Oh, I think he might be persuaded to listen to reason."

"How?"

"That's our business."

"You know it would mean political death."

"Stealing orphans' money is damn bad politics, in my opinion," said O'Hearn.

Hoffman wavered for a minute. "Well, I've got to know," he said. "If Wells ain't in on the deal, he'd fight and fight hard."

"Well, supposing he is in on the deal? Suppose he wants us to fix it up with you without his appearing in the matter?"

"That would be different. Get him and I'll consider it. How much time can I have?"

"How much do you want?"

"Three days. But if I do this, remember,

you've got to promise to handle Wells."

"O. K. Think it over and let us know."

Hoffman stood with his hand on the door-knob. The sudden respite with the possible relief ahead had pulled him together wonderfully. He hesitated a moment, glancing at the two men with his cunning little eyes.

"And I suppose there will be other valuable considerations besides the seventy-five thousand dollars?"

"Sure as anything you know," said Shanley.

Hoffman went without further words.

"It was like taking candy from the baby," said O'Hearn with a grin.

Shanley started toward the door leading into the hall, but at that moment Whitelaw re-entered.

"You heard?" said Shanley.

"Yes, all of it," said Whitelaw going toward the screen which concealed the stenographer.

"Did you get it all?"

"Yes, sir."

"Give me one copy to-morrow morning. I shall pay you liberally for your time. That's all, thank you."

The young man bowed and, having wished the three gentlemen a courteous good afternoon, took his departure.

"Ah," said Whitelaw, his hand on O'Hearn's shoulder. "You cornered him in great shape, Jim. I didn't take you out of the furnace room of the gasworks for nothing, did I?"

"Oh, I guess I keep on the job all right," said the flattered O'Hearn.

"Well, now, Wells must be looked after. He's getting stronger every day. You know there is the next legislature and that means a new senator."

"I know, John," said Whitelaw. "We must contrive to implicate Wells some way. He must be discredited and repudiated by his Committee of Seventy."

"How?" said O'Hearn.

"He's coming here to-day to see Miss Calvert. They're great friends. She was on the *Globe*, you know. Now she's my sister's private secretary."

"Oh, and Wells got her the job?" said Shanley cunningly.

Whitelaw smiled. "You can imply that. Tell a few of his friends."

"Confidentially, of course."

“Exactly. Then, when Hoffman falls, he shall not fall alone.”

“Are you terribly busy? May I come in for just a moment?” said Alice at the door. And then, taking permission for granted, she advanced into the room.

“How do you do, Mr. Shanley? How do you do, Mr. O’Hearn? Do you know that you take up a great deal of my father’s time, a good deal of which he ought to be giving me?”

“Well, that’s what he pays us for. But we’re going now,” said Shanley with a loud laugh.

“Well, I guess there is nothing more, John,” said Whitelaw. “Good day, see you both in the morning. Well, Alice, what’s up now?”

“What makes you have such a lot of business on this day which is a sort of holiday?” said Alice, watching the retreating forms of O’Hearn and Shanley as they went down the street.

“So that you can have such a lot of money on other days.”

“But you mustn’t forget this afternoon.”

“What?”

“The East End.”

“The East End?”

“Yes, laying the cornerstone. You don’t mean to tell me you’ve forgotten the celebration this afternoon? Girls,” she screamed, running to the door, “now what on earth could any one do with such a man? Father has actually forgotten what the event of the afternoon is, after all the money he’s given.”

“Oh,” said Kate Emerson, clapping her hands and giggling delightedly, “I never heard anything so funny in all my life. And I’m just crazy to hear him speak.”

Whitelaw scratched his head ruefully. “You shouldn’t laugh at an old man with a failing memory. At what time is the thing anyway, Alice?”

“At half after three.”

“Oh, then I must run and get ready.”

“Mr. Wells to see you, Miss Mary,” said the maid.

## CHAPTER XIII.

He was pacing up and down the drawing room, scowling fiercely, apparently lost in a brown study. As she stood in the doorway and watched him for fully a minute, the realizing sense of how large he loomed in her little world came over her afresh. For a moment she forgot to wonder what he must think of her changed condition. She had felt a certain timidity over their meeting. With a sudden movement he raised his head. The frown vanished; he had apparently solved his problem. And then he saw her.

"How good you look! You've got all your old color back."

"I'm very happy here."

"That's good; I'm glad."

"What did you think when you heard—and just how did you hear—that I had accepted the position of private secretary to Mr. Whitelaw's sister?"

"Harry Day wrote me. What did you think I'd think?"

"I didn't know."

"Well, one thing you must have known, that I would think it very strange that the news did not come from you."

Mary's eyes filled with tears. "Dick," she said, "I'm so sorry and ashamed now. I'm too ashamed to tell you the real reason."

"Never mind, old girl. I don't want to know it. Now I'll tell you what else I think. I think Whitelaw has a perfectly awful nerve."

"Oh, it isn't his doing at all. It was all Alice."

"Did he tell you that? He sure is a smooth article."

"Oh, Dick, dear, do be careful what you say of him. Besides he's fond of you."

"Fond of me?"

"You know the papers were full of what you did in the West at your Labor Convention."

"Local news must have been pretty scarce!"

"Mr. Whitelaw was very much interested. He read every word of your speeches."

"I can believe that."

"So, when I told him you'd be here to-day, he said he wanted to speak with you."

"With me?"

“Yes.”

“What on earth about?”

“I don’t know. Shall I call him?”

“Do you want me to see him? Because if you do, I will.”

“Oh, I want you to very much. Just wait a moment.”

She left the room in search of him. It was some moments before she returned, followed by Mr. Whitelaw.

He came forward with that fine, frank air, which none knew better than he how to assume at will. “It is a great pleasure to see you, Mr. Wells, in my house.”

“Thank you, Mr. Whitelaw. Miss Calvert has just told me that you wanted to see me. Frankly, I haven’t the remotest idea why.”

“I wanted to talk with you.”

“Then I’ll go,” said Mary.

“Oh, no, please stay,” said Dick. “There’s nothing that Mr. Whitelaw can have to say to me that you may not hear.”

“I’m sorry,” said Whitelaw, “but I think I should prefer that you would leave us alone, Miss Mary.”

“Why surely.”

“Just a moment,” said Wells imperiously.

“How long will this take, Mr. Whitelaw?  
Five minutes?”

“Possibly.”

“Then wait for me outside, Mary, on the sidewalk.”

“Very well, Dick.”

“It won’t be long,” he said, holding the door open for her. “Now, Mr. Whitelaw, what do you wish to talk about?”

“Let us go into my particular den, the library,” said Whitelaw, leading the way. He indicated a chair with a wave of his hand, and the two men sat facing each other across the table.

“May I offer you a cigar?”

“Thank you, no. May I roll a cigarette?”

“Certainly. Mr. Wells, I am a man of business. I have completely effaced from my mind the rather theoretic episodes connected with election night. We meet on absolutely new ground and anything that I may say to you will be on that basis. Is that satisfactory?”

“Perfectly.”

“You are a young man—I have no doubt of your sincerity, but—in forwarding this scheme of altruistic readjustment of public affairs you are alone, and I would like to ask

you if you believe that this Committee of Seventy and the voters who supported your candidate for Mayor are followers of your doctrines or of you and the influence you have succeeded in exciting?"'

"As far as they are able to understand," replied Dick, "I believe they are fighting for a principle."

"Precisely, but how far is that? I tell you, young man, the world and its achievements are measured by capacity, not by principle. You denounce me as a robber. I, and men like me, have the capacity of accomplishment that means success, enduring, inevitable success. You have this same endowment to a marked degree."

"Very good of you to say that, Mr. Whitelaw."

"But you are expending it in a direction where it will not meet with the co-operation of other men of capacity. You are at the head of a great herd of sheep, leading them to new pastures with promises of sweeter grass and clearer water. But, once you come upon a desert which has first to be passed, entailing a little suffering and a little self-sacrifice, and your herd will flock back to the old pastures and the old leaders, where a fair living can

be obtained; and you will be alone in the dangerous task of exploring unknown territory. And not only that, but you can never come back, although you suffer, grieve and toil. If you do come back, they'll kick you out and say that you're a fool sheep, a trouble maker, and don't deserve pity. They'll leave you to die like a dog."

"And all this means, Mr. Whitelaw?"

"All this means, my boy, that I have an intense admiration for you. Your extraordinary equipment, wisely used, would lead you to great accomplishments. Hoffman is a puppet, you know that, of the rank and file. Some like you. Others fear you. But principle don't feed the stomachs, and all of them think you're going to give something for nothing; but you're not. Even if you should place these great public utilities under municipal ownership you'd fail. No one man is strong enough, big enough to handle them; and you would lack associates with capacity. You'd be surrounded by ignorance, jealousy, incapacity, deception, and in a very short time things would go back to the old way again, with the old leaders."

"Granting all this to be true, for the sake of argument," said Dick, "what then?"

“Then,” said Whitelaw, “I want you, not because of what you have done, but because of what you may do—I want you to turn from a path which means ruin to one which may mean much success. Then, if you still cling to these ideals, you can work out their destiny in a businesslike manner. With money you can hope to accomplish something; without it, nothing.”

“Then you would like me to become a business man under your personal instruction, is that it?” asked Dick.

“Precisely.”

“Mr. Whitelaw, you’re wasting words. Thank you, no! There is no compromise between right and wrong; one cannot honestly argue with one’s conscience. Dishonest means can never justify an honest end; that is the eternal law of life. No, Mr. Whitelaw, if you offered me the world on a golden platter, with the string of a thieving corporation tied to it, I’d cheerfully depart this life and take a chance in another planet.”

“That is your final answer?”

“Absolutely. Good day, sir.” Dick rose from his chair and walked toward the door.

“And remember these words, my boy,” said Whitelaw, stopping him, “you’ll come

back to the old pastures, forlorn, hungry, dispirited, desperate. And when you do I'll let down a fence rail and give you a little corner in the cool side of the old meadow."

"If ever I come back to a patch of God's green earth that some coterie of greedy men have monopolized, I hope my bones may bleach on the desert as a warning to all the millions of poor little sheep who are to come."

"Still, you'll come back."

"If I do it will be on the tail of a cyclone, Mr. Whitelaw. I bid you good day."

Whitelaw gnawed the end of his cigar viciously. The ringing of the telephone bell was unheeded. He let it ring for some moments and then, with a gesture of exasperation, jerked the receiver from the hook.

"Well, well? Yes—this is Mr. Whitelaw—What's that?—Waiting for me to lay the cornerstone?—The Institution for Homeless Girls?—Oh, tell them to go to hell." To his ears came the sound of the butler closing the massive front door and of Wells running lightly down the steps on his way to join Mary.

He overtook her at the corner furthest away from the house. She had been in such a brown study that she had not realized that a good

quarter of an hour had elapsed since she had left the two men together.. But she knew his light swinging stride, which somehow had a rhythm that her ear never mistook. She turned and waited for him. Her face had a faint shadow of trouble over its brightness. He slowed his pace to conform with hers, and together they turned into their favorite avenue, which led out of the town straight to the open country. They were both silent.

He was bringing every effort to bear to recover his complete self-control, which had been rudely shocked by the Whitelaw philosophy; not that he was astonished at its nature, he had long been aware of that, but that he should have presumed to think that he, Richard Wells, could be so easily beguiled, so taken in. To be sure, he had paid him the compliment of understanding that he must be approached in a way slightly more subtle than that which one adopted toward the Shanleys, the O'Hearns, the O'Haras, perhaps. But that, after all, was only a difference in method and degree. The old, revolting, cynical view that every man has his price came, somehow, with a shock that was unpleasantly fresh. Wells had never heard it enunciated in quite so cold blooded a manner. In the end he was

unable to decide whether it was in his pride of intelligence or his sense of honor that he felt the more assailed.

And she, she, too, was wrestling with her own especial problem. She had not realized until he joined her how much she had, all unconsciously, builded upon this momentous interview. From the moment Mr. Whitelaw had made known his desire to speak with Dick, and alone, she had felt that their future was a stake which one might almost have visualized, lying on the table between the two men. She was not morally courageous, she acknowledged that to herself and, in acknowledging it, dismissed it lightly with a mental shrug. Moral courage, after all, when applied to affairs outside of her world, was not to be expected of a woman; surely not to the degree one looked for it in a man. For herself, she bowed to the law of expediency, and called it being sensible and practical. What if Richard and Mr. Whitelaw held views that represented different moral codes? There could be different moral codes, she argued to herself, although, of course, there could be but one code of honor. All it meant was that there were different ways of looking at the same question. Who was to decide, after all,

which was right? Why not take the tolerant view and admit that neither was wholly in the right nor wholly in the wrong? Why could they not meet at some common point, half way between the two extremes? Dick was hot-headed, impulsive, intolerant and uncompromising; this was to be expected. It went with his impulsiveness, his enthusiasm, his youth. Years had undoubtedly given his opponent the cooler head; he was certainly more temperate and broader in his views. No one could deny him generosity; it argued a large nature to dismiss so completely such personal attacks as Dick had made only within the month. Her reverie was broken by her companion's hand on her arm.

"Well," he panted, with an affectation of complete breathlessness, "I had purposed going for a peaceable stroll, but this is a flight, a stampede, a rout. What nameless terror stalks on our trail?"

She was not in the mood to meet his lighter one. She perceived that, with his extraordinary faculty for dismissing the disagreeable, he had recovered from the sharp shock of his encounter with Whitelaw. That it had been a shock she did not need to be told. She had schooled herself too well not to read that

much in his face. As he joined her, his air had been unmistakably truculent, a faint after-glow of the look he had worn the night of election. If she yielded to his mood now, she might never learn from him what had passed between them.

"I wasn't conscious that I was going faster than usual, any more than I suppose you were conscious of the fact that not one word have you said since you asked me to wait for you outside the house. Why outside I am at a loss to imagine. I felt like the parlor maid waiting for her best young man."

Richard stopped short. "Why, Mary," he said, "what do you mean?"

"Oh, I never could tell you all I mean. I should despair of ever being able to make you understand. I think you are the most inconsistent person I have ever known. At one moment you touch my heart by your wonderful thoughtfulness; the next you wring it with your inconsideration. Now don't look like that. If it weren't that it were quite unlady-like, I should enjoy boxing your ears. Why don't you tell me I'm wrong if you think I am, in place of standing there with that look of perfectly inhuman patience."

"I didn't know I was standing with a look

of perfectly inhuman patience," said Richard. "Let me reassure you; my look belies me. Does it not occur to you that you're just a bit unjust? I admit I'm careless and thoughtless and inconsiderate at times, but that is largely because I never really had any one to think of but myself before you came. And as for my having made you do an undignified thing in asking you to wait for me outside of that man's house—and mind you, in the circumstances, I don't think it was an unheard-of thing to ask—if I hadn't done so, how could I have seen you again? I did not have to be a prophet nor the son of a prophet to foresee that an interview between Mr. Whitelaw and myself could have but one result: I must immediately leave the house, never to enter it again."

"Oh, Dick, what have you done, what have you done?" wailed Mary. "What more perfect illustration of your inconsideration can I give you than just this? You never stop to think of me and what a quarrel between you and Mr. Whitelaw will mean to me, but you sacrifice yourself and me and our future, all for a quixotic idea. You are so generous in most things; why can't you be more generous and just a little tolerant with Mr. Whitelaw?

Surely, even you will admit that he has set you an example. Think of all the dreadful things you have been saying about him. Why must you carry personalities into what, after all, is only a difference in politics? Dick, Dick, it breaks my heart to say so, but I will be honest with you in saying that I think that in this quarrel he has shown himself the bigger man."

For a moment he stood silently looking at her; her eyes, blurred with ever-ready tears, saw the pain in his.

"I think I will leave you if you will forgive me," he said. "You are excited; something has upset you. I know that you cannot fully realize what you say."

Lifting his hat, he turned and left her, nor, as long as Mary could see him in the fast gathering twilight, did he once look back.

## CHAPTER XIV.

She had gone straight away to her room upon re-entering the house. For a long hour she sat at the window without a light, gazing out into the darkness which did not, somehow, seem so impenetrable, so palpable, even as the darkness that she felt was closing in about her. With closed eyes, her head supported by the back of the chair, she had, to the best of her ability, reviewed the situation impartially. She was right, she was right! And he was wholly in the wrong. She might have been more tactful. She had hurt him cruelly, but she reflected bitterly that the ache in her own sore heart was by now probably greater than his. He had such an extraordinary faculty for forgetting. She had a curious feeling of mental numbness; tears would have been a relief, but she had no tears at command. He did not love her; no man could love a woman and put so many things first. Did she really love him? She had tried to answer the question honestly; she was no longer sure. That he fascinated her was be-

yond doubt. His personal magnetism gripped her every second she was with him. The sound of his voice, the glimpse of his figure in the distance, the glance of his eye, the rhythm of his step, made her heart leap in her breast. But was this love?

And then she dreamed again, the dear dream that had made all these last months endurable. She reviewed each happy hour of companionship. No, no, no, she could not, she would not give him up. For good, or for evil, she must be his, body and soul. For the moment she felt capable of any sacrifice. To walk through life by his side, cheering, sustaining, encouraging, consoling, a true help-meet, that in itself would be enough. And, for reward to bask in his smile, to lave her tired heart in his tender voice!

When the dressing bell rang she debated whether or not to send word that the convenient headache had overtaken her. But, on reflection, she decided that she would gain nothing by procrastination. Moreover, Alice would be sure to come to her room, filled with kindly solicitation, and Alice's eye, though kindly, was keen. She would, as the phrase is, "put two and two together and make four."

All during the long dinner, more formal than usual, as there were a number of guests, she felt Mr. Whitelaw's eye upon her. And, too, there was a subtle kindness and tenderness in his manner, a note of sympathy and the implication of a complete understanding which she found herself resenting, even while she reproached herself with black ingratitude. She devoutly hoped that the party would not break up until late. Then she could slip off to bed before he had the opportunity of broaching the subject of his conversation with Richard. Every quivering nerve in her body, every throb of her head, which was genuinely aching now, protested against touching on the subject at present.

It was a wan Mary who presented herself at breakfast. She had slept but little and, strangely enough, she had been unable to find relief in tears. Of one thing she was resolved: She would struggle no longer. She would leave herself in the hands of fate, let it rest on the knees of the gods. Whether she broke with Richard or whether she married him, clearly she was foredoomed to unhappiness. She even began to have a sort of conscious satisfaction in contemplating herself in the role of martyr.

During breakfast Mr. Whitelaw was much occupied with his paper and an unusual number of letters. On the plea of a slight cold, he had decided against going to his office and had sent his man downtown, before the rather late breakfast, to get his mail. Mary felt sure that before the day was over he would send for her to the library. She had ceased to dread the ordeal. A sort of apathy, a deadly numbness held her in its grip. Happiness was over for her, she told herself. She had missed grasping it, although she had rubbed elbows with it. Life was over, at least all the joy of life. The endless vista of her days stretched before her in a gray prospect. She saw herself, as it were, passed along. She would survive Miss Whitelaw, of course, and then, she supposed, she would become a sort of a genteel companion for one opulent lady after another for the rest of her life. All the Calverts were unusually long-lived. She could not even hope to die early, as had her dear mother. She was her father's daughter through and through. With the despair of extreme youth, which is so naïve, she abandoned hope. All that was left for her was to face life with what fortitude and dignity she might.

As she had anticipated, it was shortly before luncheon that Mr. Whitelaw sent to ask her if she could spare him a few moments. Miss Whitelaw, of course, had not as yet appeared.

He was pacing the floor when she came into the room. She idly wondered why it was that striding back and forth seemed to give men such satisfaction. How often she had seen Richard walking himself out of a mood.

"Well, Miss Mary," he said, "I suppose you already know that my little talk with your friend, Mr. Wells, did not exactly bring about the results I had hoped?"

"Yes, I know," she said dully.

He paused with his back to the window and looked at her steadily for a moment in silence.

"I am going to make an appeal to you," he said, "which I hope you will believe is, if not purely disinterested, actuated by no motive which could, in any circumstances, militate against your happiness. But first will you allow me the privilege of a friend old enough to be your father, and let me ask you a very pertinent and personal question. Are you engaged to Richard Wells?"

Mary hesitated a moment.

"He has told me that he loves me. He has asked me to marry him when he is in a posi-

tion that will justify his thinking of marriage. I have promised to wait for him," she said in a strange staccato voice.

"When did you promise him?"

"On the night of election, just before you came into the office of the *Globe*."

"Ah," he said sadly, "then you did not remember, did you, that, believing my disinterestedness, you had given me your promise long before that not to take any important step without consulting me?"

"Yes," she said, "I remembered it and I remembered it at the very moment that I promised him." She offered neither explanation nor apology.

"Ah, you must love him," he said.

For a moment she sat perfectly silent; then the tears, which had refused to come at her bidding all through the long, hard night, came readily enough. With her head upon her arms outstretched upon the table she sobbed her heart out. When finally she had become quieter, he came over to her and stroked her bowed head with a tenderness that a woman might have used.

"My poor little girl!" he said, "my poor little girl."

Presently she regained her self-control.

She sat erect once more. Her voice had a curious detached note as if she were speaking of some one else, of something quite outside of her personal experience.

"I would answer your question truthfully, believe me, if I were only sure of the answer myself. But I am not. That is the horrible part of it all. I don't know, I don't know. I only know that I have never been so tormented, so tortured in all my life. And yet the happiest hours I have ever had I've spent with him. I am no longer myself. I realize that I love him as I have never loved any human being before. There are times when I almost pray that I may never see him again. I believe in him with my whole soul. I profoundly distrust him; so you see that I cannot answer your question. Of one thing only am I certain, he does not love me as a man should love the woman he wishes to make his wife. She should be his first consideration. I don't know just where I come in the list, but his career, his ambition, politics, friends, associations that have no meaning, all have precedence over me. Still, if he were to come to me now, here, in this very room and ask me to go away with him at once, I should be weak enough to do so. I don't for a moment think

it right that one person should so influence another. But what does it matter? I faced it all out last night. Either way I shall be unhappy. I repeat, what difference can it make?"

"My child, my child, you are overwrought! Youth so magnifies and exaggerates, it takes things so heroically, so tragically! And yet I think I see just what you mean. I think you are wrong to doubt his feeling for you. The trouble is that you exact too much from a man of his temperament. He is a dreamer, a fanatic, an impossibly impractical man in this workaday world. The woman who marries him will have to have great strength of character and, in a sense, force her happiness. But he will be true to her and devoted to her according to his notion of devotion. From what I know of you both, I should be inclined to prophesy that, granted you were really in love with each other, you might be very happy. But it largely depends upon you yourself. Wells interests me, you know that. For that reason, and for the additional reason that I have long suspected your deeper interest in him, I wished to see him yesterday. I had intended to make him a definite proposition that could not but have been of the greatest advantage to him. I would have offered him

an opening such as I would have leaped at at his age, such as comes to but few young men, believe me. But he wouldn't even give me an opportunity. Of course," said Whitelaw with a shrug, "I discount much that he said as he was—well, really—unnecessarily excited. But after all, I was in my own house. He had come of his own volition under my roof. I think that he should have taken that into consideration just a little more than he did."

Mary rose to her feet. Whitelaw's well-considered words had just the effect he had calculated. There was no softness in her now, not one little bit of tenderness for her lover at this moment. In outraging, as he plainly had, the decencies imposed by the most primitive law of hospitality, he had outraged her. It was only another instance of his extraordinary, his selfish lack of consideration.

"I am sure that you did everything that a generous nature would prompt. I thank you. Believe me, though you have little reason to credit it, I am deeply grateful. When Mr. Wells so far forgets himself as to be rude to you in the house in which you have given me shelter and a home he forces me to make a personal issue of it. I shall leave him in no doubt as to what I think of his conduct."

"I should much rather that you wouldn't give it a second thought, Miss Mary; I only mentioned it because I wished you to understand perfectly that my every thought in connection with you and Mr. Wells has been for your mutual welfare. Of course, we disagree upon the vital issue, the great issue, I may say. And, if you will forgive me for saying so, while I do not question your friend's enthusiasm, I cannot, appreciating his intelligence, help questioning his sincerity. He is too clever a man to have much faith in the stability of the cause he chooses to espouse. But let us say no more about that. I thank you for your confidence. You must believe that the kindly feeling I have for you remains unchanged. If I appeared momentarily hurt upon learning that in face of your promise to me you had taken so momentous a step, that is all past now. It would have been strange had you not done so. Youth can never understand nor make allowance for age. If the wide gulf that separates them be bridged at all, it is age that must do it. After all, we elders have the advantage, for we should be able to remember how we felt when we were young. And now go and dry your eyes, my dear. I think I heard the luncheon bell a

moment ago. We mustn't either of us make ourselves unpopular with Emma by being too late."

The afternoon seemed endless to Mary. Never before had Miss Whitelaw had so many notes that required immediate answers. Then there were two momentous lists to be prepared for some luncheons she purposed giving. By the time the day's task was completed there were some calls to pay which brought them to the dinner hour, so that it was not until Miss Whitelaw had said good night that Mary found leisure for her own letter. Alice had gone to the theatre, Mr. Whitelaw had dined out, so that Mary had the smaller library quite to herself. For a long time she sat before the desk staring at the paper before her. Then she began to write rapidly:

“Thursday evening.”

“If you could know how heavy a heart I have carried with me through the long day and the longer night I have passed since you left me, I think that even you might wish that you had thought of me just a little, have modified your transports, as it were, at least while you were under this roof. Surely you have done enough, have you not? You have de-

nounced Mr. Whitelaw in violent and unmeasured terms at the various conventions to which you were a delegate. Your opinions of him, and what I believe you term his methods, have appeared in the public prints so that he who ran might read. Perhaps, I cannot tell, you contributed these opinions yourself to the papers. I never expect to understand why politics cannot be conducted without personalities. But since they cannot, apparently, then I must make this a personal question between you and me. I came up here from the South alone and friendless. Mr. Whitelaw first gave me a position on the *Globe* and then he took me into his beautiful home where I am regarded almost as one of the family. Caring for me, I cannot understand your bitterness toward him. I cannot understand your attacks on him in public. Failing to understand these two things, how can I understand your coming to his house to see me and doing as you have done? Oh, never fear, he was too considerate of me to repeat your words, but he could not disguise the fact that you had forgotten both whose house you were in and whom it sheltered. I am sorry if I write bitterly, but I am at least honest. I cannot see why I should be sacrificed to a

cause which I have grown to detest and which no one who knows your quick intelligence can credit for one moment your really believing in.

“Despairingly,  
“MARY.”

She addressed and sealed her letter and, throwing a light scarf over her head, went to the letter box and posted it herself. As Williams was letting her in on her return, she glanced back and saw a postman collecting the mail from the box. A sudden revulsion of feeling swept over her. Her letter must not go; she would write another in the morning, after a night's rest. She might have been unjust, particularly when she questioned his sincerity.

“Oh, Williams,” she said, “you see that postman there, collecting the letters? Be good enough to ask him to give you back one which I have just dropped in the box myself, addressed to Mr. Richard Wells. There is something I wish to add to it. I will stand here and make him a sign that it is all right.”

“Beg pardon, Miss, but I fear he wouldn't give it to me. It's against the law, Miss.”

"Against the law?" said Mary with a despairing gesture, and then recovering herself, "Oh, is it Williams? I'm sorry, I didn't know that. Thank you." And she went into the house.

## CHAPTER XV.

In a small room in the City Hall just off the Council Chamber, a room known as the Committee Room, in a swivel chair at the head of a large table littered with writing paper, pads, pencils, pens, ink and blue prints, sat Harry Day. He was writing violently, from time to time he hurled a sheet of copy at Reddy, the office boy of the *Globe*, who was making frantic efforts to inhale a Turkish cigarette without strangling.

"Here, kid, take this down to the City Editor right away and tell him that's all until I send on the regular story of the meeting."

"I guess he'll be glad to get it, alright, alright," said Reddy impudently. "I forgot to tell you that he told me to ask you if you thought you were working on a daily paper or a monthly magazine. It's been so long since he heard from you."

Reddy had apparently calculated the effect of this impudent speech to a nicety, for, dodging skilfully at the end of it, he just managed to elude the paper weight which Day fired at his head.

"Say, Mr. Day, you ain't got a nickel that ain't working, have you?"

"Yes. Here you are," said Day, tossing the required coin.

"Much obliged. I'll put it to work all right at the soda fountain. By the way, I dropped into the drug store on the way up and I saw Wells there, tanking up on bromo seltzers. He looked as if his foot had slipped from the wagon all right."

"Shut up. Besides, you're dead wrong."

"Well, he sure did look as if he'd had a bad night." With this last shot Reddy departed, dragging his reluctant feet after him in a manner which made Day cast a roving eye over the table in search of other paper weights.

"Hullo, Day. You look as if you'd been busy," said a short, fat young man, as he sauntered in the doorway.

"Hullo, Pritchard. What the devil you doing up here?"

"Oh, City Editor sent me up to help you out."

"Huh! Doesn't he think I can take care of this story?"

"Oh, it ain't that; but he said that there were to be some special fireworks at the

meeting to-night and I was to help you."

"I don't know what special fireworks there are. All the world and his wife know that the Whitelaw franchises are to be jammed through the Council as per programme and that the second part of the concert will open with Mayor Hoffman's veto. It seems to me that the whole story could practically have been written this morning."

"Oh, he's got an inside tip that something big's coming off. A regular surprise party."

"Surprise party be damned," said Day, pacing up and down the room with his hands in his pockets. "I tell you, I could write the dope now. I've got a copy of the veto message; got hold of it an hour ago. I tell you what you do: Go into the Council Chamber and see if you can pick up any gossip."

A murmur of many voices was heard as Pritchard opened the door of the Council Chamber. Day paused in his walk to listen. As the door closed, he resumed his nervous pace, almost colliding, at the door that led to the hallway, with Dick Wells.

"Hullo, Dick, old man. I'm mighty glad to see you. But I say, your feathers seem to be a bit ruffled."

"I am a bit untidy, that's a fact," said

Wells, surveying his wilted collar and un-blacked boots in the big mirror that hung at one side of the room. "But tell me, Harry, what's going on?"

"Nothing. And that's going on damn slow."

"What's the meaning of all these police?"  
"Police?"

"Oh, man, man! Don't you know that nearly two hundred police have been marched to the City Hall? That half of them are outside and half of them in? What does it mean?"

"Oh, nothing. They're just wanted to keep order. There must be thousands of people in the street. But what's the matter with you, Dick? You look all in."

"And I feel it," said Dick quietly. He looked at his friend with haggard eyes.

"You haven't been drinking again?"

"No, not a drop. You know that's all over for good."

"Well then, brace up man, dear. As long as you keep your reserved seat on the water wagon you're sure to win out in the end."

"Win out?" said Dick bitterly. "Win what?"

"Why, win your fight against Whitelaw. Put him out of business."

"Oh, yes, that I can do, I guess. But, Harry, I wanted to win something more than just a victory. I wanted to win happiness and a better sort of way to live."

"You mean Mary Calvert."

"Yes."

"Have you had a row?"

"No," said Dick.

For a moment they paced the room together in silence.

"Oh, what's the use? There isn't any," said Dick in a voice whose tense misery matched his haggard eyes and drawn face. "It wasn't on the books for a fellow like me to win a girl like Mary. When she first came on the *Globe* I had been jogging along in a pretty careless way. But from the first moment I saw her I knew that she was the girl in the world for me and I also knew that I would have to buck up and do something really worth while before I could win her."

"Well, you've made good. You went through this campaign like a fire engine at full gallop. That's a pretty big starter. What more does she want? Oh, women! women! women!" said Day, shaking his head

despairingly as he thought of the limitations of the weaker sex.

"She won't see things as I do. She can't get hold of my point of view. You know, she's been at Whitelaw's now for more than two months. She thinks I'm in all wrong. I had a letter from her only this morning. Some one's been at her and almost convinced her that I'm not on the level, not square. And she simply can't see that the cause I'm battling for is worth the fight."

"Damned if I don't agree with her in that," said Day. "I've been in this newspaper business long enough to get a pretty correct line on the way the trick is turned. You're a dear old dreamer and you think that the people, in large capitals, are going to hooray and hooraw for you because you fought for them."

"I don't think it, I know it."

"I tell you, you're all wrong. The dirty-faced mob is the most treacherous thing in this world. Take it from me, Dick, if you stick to this game, the time isn't very far off when they'll brand the double cross on your back red-hot and sizzling until you yell for help. Go ahead and grab Mary and grab a good job with a good salary and let the

man in the street take care of himself."

"Don't! I hate to hear you when you talk like that. Now I'm not posing in the lime-light, but I realize how the principles involved in this fight are far and away from all questions of personality."

"All right, old man, all right. But just give your humble servant a nice little wife, a nice little home and a couple of kiddies, three square meals a day, a trolley ride on Sunday, with a check book that doesn't look too anæmic, and I'll leave all the ideals, theories, politics, philosophies and the rest of it to you and never ask to have one of them back."

"Oh, you, you're incorrigible."

"Not a bit of it, I'm sensible."

"Ah, well," said Dick, "I must leave the lecture platform and get down to work. I've got lots to do here to-night," he added, pointing to the Council Chamber. He paused a moment with his hand on the knob of the door. "I say, Harry, if anything startling comes up you'll put me next?"

"Surest thing ever," said Day.

Once more the murmur of voices was heard as Dick opened the door. A part of the sound seemed to come from the gallery that ran around the Council Chamber and a part from

the street, doubtless through some open window.

"Oh, Mr. Day, I'm so glad to see you. Is this the way to the gallery?"

Day turned quickly to the small door on his left to see the charming picture of Mary Calvert framed in the doorway. Her eyes burned with excitement and eagerness; her face had a most unwonted and lovely flush. Beside her stood Alice Whitelaw, attended, as a matter of course, by her satellite, Kate Emerson.

"Well," said Day astonished, "if I had been asked to name the three last persons in the world I expected to see here, I should have named you three. What in the name of all that's wonderful put the idea into your heads?"

"It's sure to be exciting," said Alice.

"I'm just crazy about lawmaking," giggled Kate Emerson. "I've been to Washington twice when the Senate was in session, and I thought it was perfectly dear."

Day gave a wry smile. "Well, if that was perfectly dear, I can promise you that you will find that this is equally perfectly cheap. But what was your reason, Miss Calvert?"

"Mine? Oh, I—er—well, you see, they insisted upon coming, and, of course, I had to come to act as chaperone." She flashed a glance at Day, which that astute young person flattered himself that he interpreted accurately. "Don't you think you could arrange to stow us away in some inconspicuous corner?"

"Come on, I'll see what I can do," said Day. "Dick is here," he said to Mary in a low tone, under cover of the staccato laughter of Miss Emerson, who announced that she thought a mirror in a committee room for men was just the funniest thing she had ever seen in her life. "I wish you'd wait here, I think he wants to see you."

"I know I want to see him," said Mary.

"I'll send him out. Now will you young ladies be good enough to follow me?" Day opened the door leading to the Council Chamber and, followed by Kate and Alice, made his way to the gallery.

Mary sank into a chair behind the door; she needed a moment or two to collect her thoughts before seeing Wells. She knew that her letter must have hurt him, and she was bitterly sorry that she had sent it. She knew he would forgive her; he always forgave her.

He was big and fine and generous; that no one could deny. She was so screened by the open door that Shanley and O'Hearn, who entered hurriedly at this moment, were unaware that the room had any occupant other than themselves.

"How about Wells?" said Shanley.

"He's due to go down with the crash with Hoffman," said O'Hearn.

Mary rose to her feet and, confronting the astonished Shanley, looked at him with a straight and level gaze. O'Hearn, who, apparently, held the theory that at times absence of body transcends mere presence of mind, dove hurriedly into the Council Chamber.

"Well, young woman," said Shanley, with coarse familiarity, "when did you go back into newspaper work?"

"I haven't gone back yet."

"What brings you here then?"

Mary colored with annoyance. "I have brought Miss Whitelaw and a friend down to see the excitement."

"Does her father know it?"

"I believe not."

"Then she shan't stay. Her father would be as mad as a hornet. Where is she?"

"She went through that door with Mr. Day of the *Globe*."

"Well, I say she can't stay," said Shanley, with rising anger. He hurriedly threw open the door into the Council Chamber and ran face to face into Wells. For one moment the two men looked steadily at each other without any sign of recognition. With a snarl of anger that was almost lupine, Shanley went on his way.

"Oh, Dick, I'm so glad," said Mary. Somehow when she saw him she never could remember one-half of what she wished to say. At such moments she knew at the bottom of her heart that merely to be with him was all-satisfying.

"I didn't expect to see you here to-night, Mary," he said softly.

"Oh, Alice and Kate wanted to come, so I came to show them the way."

"Was that the only reason?"

"My wanting to see you was the only reason."

"Your letter came this morning, Mary. Listen, dear. Don't you think it would be wiser for you not to take this political fight so personally?"

"Did my letter hurt you?"

"Why, you must have known that when you questioned my sincerity, my honesty, that it would hurt me."

"That's why I came to-night to say I'm sorry. Forgive me, Dick, forgive that letter."

"Can you doubt it? But now that you are here, I want to try to tell you once more what this fight really means to us. I want you to know what it really means to win a victory for the people, to inaugurate a better state of things."

"Oh," she said sadly, "that's just the trouble. I do know what it means—to us."

"Mary, I don't understand what you mean now. Have you something to say to me? Well, please don't hesitate. Say it. But first let me say that if it is only to reiterate how good and kind Mr. Whitelaw is, and to you in particular, as an argument for my not fighting him politically, don't go on. All men of his sort are good to women; it's part of their method; it's part of the game, my dear, to have a beautiful home life, to give extensively to charities, to be pillars of churches."

"Please, Dick, don't speak that way of Mr. Whitelaw. No matter what your views

may be, he is my friend, and, according to the standards I have been brought up to revere, he is a gentleman."

Dick drew in his breath with a quick gasp.  
"And you mean that I——"

"Oh, Dick, can't you see the position you're placing me in? You're big and fine and strong, but you're going the wrong way. You're mixing yourself up with a lot of common, good-for-nothing, self-seeking people. They're only using you. Can't you see that this can't go on?"

"What can't go on?"

"Why, things between you and me. I mean the way they are. I can't love you and be true to you without being an ingrate and false to the Whitelaws."

"I begin to understand," said Dick. His voice was a bit unsteady, but his glance never left her troubled face. He had never seen her look so lovely in one sense, but he missed a certain frankness and honesty in her gaze. He knew that she was keeping something back. "What is it, Mary? You have something more to tell me."

"You don't appreciate how I have labored to fix things so that your life and mine may not be utterly severed. Can't you see how

far apart we're drifting? Oh!" she said passionately, "why won't you give up all this thing you call your struggle, to satisfy a lot of ungrateful people, and be content to come to me just because we love one another. Why don't you do what Mr. Whitelaw asks you to do? What he asked you to do the day he had the talk with you in the library. Oh, he told me all about that. Let the people take care of themselves. Am not I as much to you as a lot of common people? Why can't you go into business and succeed and get away from all this nastiness? Why can't you?"

"Then you come here with a definite offer? What is it?" For the first time there was a strange, new note of harshness and coldness in his voice which she had never heard before.

"Only myself."

"And your friend, Whitelaw? Surely he will do something."

Her eyes left his. "We can be so happy." And then, with a sort of pathetic bravado she faced him again. "He will do everything in his power for both of us."

At last she had struck a raw nerve. His face blazed with anger, but not at her. She

shrank against the table; she watched him striding up and down the room with the piteous look of a terrified child.

"Now I understand. They've tricked you as they've tried to trick me. They've taken you into their home; they've dazzled you with the luxury of their life; they've won you over. And now they want to use you. You don't see it. They want to use you to play on me, to drag me down at the last moment. But they can't do it, even with you to help them. Oh, I know now. When I went into this fight it was for you, to do something to make you proud, to square what had been a reckless life. But the fight is bigger than you and bigger than me. It is bigger than love. If I loved you with the love of all the men in the world I would not turn now from this duty, this task that I have set myself."

"Then you do not love me."

"You don't seem to understand."

"I understand but one thing; that is, that a man who really loves a woman will give up anything in the world for her," said Mary with a burst of tears. She went over to the mirror, making a strong fight to recover her self-control.

"Ah, Mary, you won't even try to understand," he said sadly.

Through the open door of the Council Chamber came Shanley and Day, followed by Alice and Miss Emerson. The Council was evidently now in session, and the drone of the clerk's voice, reading resolutions and ordinances, came plainly to the ear. To Alice's keen eye both Dick and Mary showed traces of an emotional strain; but she nevertheless addressed herself to Mary. Men were so stupid about pulling themselves together.

"Well, Mary, Mr. Shanley says it isn't a proper place for young ladies even with Mr. Day for a chaperone, so we can't stay. Good-by, Mr. Day, thank you just the same."

"Don't mention it," said Day with a grin.  
"Glad to have you drop in at any time."

"Good-by, Mr. Day," said Kate Emerson, bestowing on Harry a languishing glance.  
"You know I'm just crazy about newspaper men. They're so interesting."

"How many have you met?"

"Only you."

"Ah, then I can understand your enthusiasm."

"And, then, I think politics are perfectly cute."

Shanley, who had arrogated to himself the office of guide, philosopher and friend, hurried the three girls down the stairway.

"Can you beat that? Politics perfectly cute!"

"You seem to have made a hit," said Dick.

"Sure. That's the kind that always warm up to me," said Harry with his one-sided grin. "But to business, of course, not for publication. I suppose you wrote Hoffman's veto message?"

"Yes, I wrote it. Come on up to his office with me. I want to talk with you a bit. The session's only just begun."

## CHAPTER XVI.

Horace Whitelaw, with his usual caution, did not wish to appear too prominently in the proceedings of the evening; so he had carefully timed his arrival upon the scene of a conflict so momentous to him to take place after the session of the City Council was well begun. Accompanied by his two henchmen, therefore, he did not reach the Committee Room until after Wells and Day had left it.

"Well, how about Wells?" he said, pulling off his gloves.

"Don't suspect a thing," said O'Hearn.

"That's good. There'll be some suspicion connected with him before the night's over. And now for Hoffman. What's his complaint, John?"

"Oh—wants to see the color of our money," said Shanley.

Whitelaw stepped over to the long table and, having made a sign to Shanley, handed him with much precaution a package done up in common newspaper under the cover of the table. "Here it is. Has he signed the message of approval?"

"Not yet."

"You gave him the one our lawyers drafted?"

"Yes, but he won't sign it until he gets the dough. That's the worst of a crook; he'd suspect his own brother."

Whitelaw's jaws snapped with a click that Shanley knew of old. "He shan't play with us. He'll sign that message before he gets one cent, or—he'll go to jail. I'm sick of his dilly-dally way of doing business."

"He's just got—" began Shanley. He paused, for in the doorway stood Hoffman, his flabby face paler than ever; but in his little pig eyes there burned an almost insane excitement.

"Glad to see you, Mr. Mayor," said Whitelaw in his blandest tones.

"You're alone?" said Hoffman hoarsely.

"Can't you see we are?" said O'Hearn shrilly.

"Well, I've come to tell you"—he paused and panted as if he'd been running—"that I can't carry out your programme."

"In what respect, Mr. Mayor?" said Whitelaw evenly.

"I can't sign that message of approval."

"Why not?"

"Because," said Hoffman violently, although he still kept his voice down, "you've lied to me. You said you had Wells and you haven't."

"How do you know?" said O'Hearn.

"How do I know? Have you seen those people outside? Thousands and thousands of them? Filling the streets for blocks? Have you seen them, I say? Well, they're Independents and Wells has got them there. He's ready to fight."

"Well, let him fight. You ain't afraid of him and a lot of dirty Polacks and Dagoes, are you? Where in hell's your nerve, anyway?" sneered Shanley.

"You've nothing to fear, Mr. Mayor. What you are going to do is perfectly lawful and you have the police."

Hoffman cast a look that was almost eloquent upon Whitelaw, and going to the window, threw it open. A confused murmuring, as of thousands of voices, came up from the street below. For a moment all four men listened silently and then, as Hoffman closed the window again, they withdrew by a common impulse and gathered around the table.

"What can two or three hundred police do with a mob like that? Listen to them. If

you think the police can handle that crowd, why, go ahead and try. But you can count me out."

"The police ain't all."

"They ain't? What d'you mean, O'Hearn?" Hoffman's voice never rose above a hoarse whisper.

"I mean that the second troop of cavalry and the first battery of artillery are in the armory only two blocks away."

"And," said Whitelaw, "the captains of both of these organizations are very close friends of my own. Captain Steward is vice-president of the Mutual Trust Company. Captain Egbert is the cashier of the Second National Bank. I can depend on them both."

Hoffman made a despairing gesture. "What can they do? I'd have to call on the Governor."

"Governor be damned. You've got a legal right to call on all the state troops living in the city without fussing with the Governor. It was arranged that both the troop and the battery should drill to-night instead of Tuesday."

"Who did this, John?"

"Never mind who did it. It's enough to know it's done."

Once more Whitelaw's bland voice made a sharp contrast to Shanley's hoarse violence. "I give you my word, Mr. Mayor, there's not the slightest reason to be uneasy."

"Then I can call all of them, any time?" Hoffman's voice was eager.

"You don't need to. We'll do it for you," said Shanley.

"And now, Mr. Mayor"—Whitelaw's voice was cold and stern—"the time for temporizing is past. Will you sign that message of approval or be exposed in the morning? I want an answer, yes or no."

Hoffman wiped his forehead, cold and clammy with sweat. "No, no," he panted. "I don't see how I can."

"Then I'm afraid I'll have to show you." Whitelaw drew a typewritten manuscript from his pocket, which he slowly unfolded. "In addition to the proofs of your having embezzled certain funds left in your charge, I have here a stenographic report, duly attested and sworn to, of your interview with Shanley and O'Hearn, in my house. It can be used against you to show that you tried to extort money from us to square your defalcations. You see, Mr. Mayor, you've gone a little too far and you've got now to see a

way to carry out your part of the agreement."

"And besides, don't forget there were to be other valuable considerations," said O'Hearn slyly.

Hoffman sank into a chair and, with his elbows on the table, buried his face in his hands. For a moment no one spoke. The Mayor raised his pasty face. Whitelaw's keen eye read victory in his whole demeanor.

"Where is it?" whispered Hoffman.

"Slip it to him, John," said O'Hearn.

Shanley's glance took in the whole room. "Here, back of me on the table," he said in a low voice.

"But I can trust you? You'll protect me? You'll see that it's all safe?"

"Sure thing," said O'Hearn.

"Have you the message of approval drafted by my attorney?" asked Whitelaw.

The Mayor nodded.

"Then sign it and hand it to John."

With fingers that trembled so that he could hardly manage the buttons, Hoffman drew a typewritten sheet of paper from his inside pocket. He kept continually wetting his thick lips, parched and dried as with fever. Seating himself at the head of the table,

where Day had been doing his writing, he seized a pen and signed the document with nervous haste. As he was about to hand it to Shanley a sudden thought came to him.

“That stenographic report—Is it the only one there is?”

“Oh, yes.”

“Then I think I should have it now.”

“You’re quite right.”

Whitelaw was about to hand it to him when Shanley arrested him with a gesture.

“Wait a minute. I want to read your signature first, Gus. It’s all right,” he said, nodding to Whitelaw, who at once handed over to the Mayor the damning document he so much desired.

“I left a package here a few moments ago,” said Hoffman in a loud voice, which contrasted absurdly with the husky tones he had used all through the interview. “I’m sure I must have left it on this table. Where the devil! Oh, here it is.” And while the other three discreetly turned their backs, he possessed himself of the newspaper bundle and put it in his inside pocket. In the excitement of the moment he quite forgot the fatal report of the stenographer, which was lying on the table at the spot where he had

lately affixed his signature and where Harry Day's story of the evening's proceedings, which was, of course, not yet completed, was lying.

"Mr. Mayor, will you smoke? John? Jim? I think I can guarantee these. They're Carolinas," said Whitelaw, proffering his cigar case. "And, by the way, John, see that that message gets to the clerk of the Council in the proper manner. And, Jim," he beckoned O'Hearn to him, "Hoffman's right about that crowd outside. If necessary, see that the cavalry and battery disperse them as soon as the message is made public. And"—O'Hearn stopped on his way to the door—"find out all about Wells," he added in a low voice.

O'Hearn left the room hurriedly as Shanley started toward the Council Chamber. Taking a newspaper from his pocket, Whitelaw sat down in a corner of the room and began to read. As Shanley opened the door, the voice of the president could be distinctly heard: "The question is, the resolution providing for the paving—" The closing of the door cut off the rest, just as Dick Wells came down the stairs leading from the Mayor's private office.

"Hullo, Hoffman, I've been looking for you." He didn't see Whitelaw, seated in the far corner.

"I've been around for an hour," said Hoffman sullenly.

"Not in your office."

"Well I don't necessarily have to sit in my office, do I?"

His irritation puzzled Dick. "Have you read the veto message since I made those two changes?"

"Yes."

"All right?"

"Oh, it covers the ground, I guess."

"Have you signed it?"

"Not yet."

"And why not? It's got to go in to-night."

"Look here, Wells, don't you interfere too much in my business."

"Your business?" said Dick, his voice rising in his turn. "This is the people's business. And they're out there waiting impatiently for it to be done. Why haven't you signed that message?"

Hoffman sprang from his chair. Once more, at the mention of the crowd outside, fear had him in its grip. "I haven't signed it yet because I've been advised that it will

be illegal to anticipate the action of the Council."

"Why, I never thought of that," said Dick.

"Of course you never thought of it. And now let me tell you something, Dick Wells. When the Council passes those franchises my message will be there all right, and don't you forget it. You'll know my message when you hear it."

"Well, I ought to, Hoffman; I wrote it."

"That's what I say; you'll probably recognize it."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean just that. When you hear it, you'll know it."

"Look here, Hoffman, you're not trying any funny business, are you?"

"What do you mean by funny business?" said Hoffman with an attempt at bluster.

"I mean, everything is going through just as we planned, isn't it?"

"Why, how else should it go?"

"Well," said Dick, nodding toward the window, "if it doesn't, I'd hate like the devil to be in your shoes."

With a muttered imprecation, Hoffman hurried from the room, and Whitelaw, deeming it more prudent that Wells should not

know that he had overheard this very interesting conversation, slipped out of the door into the hallway, barely escaping a collision with Reddy Smith, the *Globe* office boy.

"Gee!" said Reddy in gleeful tones, "but there's a mob in the street; more than a million people. Where's Mr. Day?"

"Where's Mr. Day?" said that gentleman, entering from the Council Chamber with his hands full of copy. "Well, where have you been? And what in the devil have you been doing? Warren telephoned that he chased you out of the office half an hour ago."

"Well, you see," said Reddy calmly, "I let the pilot of my airship have a night off. I'd like to see you try and get through that crowd. It's worse than election night."

"Well, here now, take this and git."

"Anything more?"

"Yes, on the table over there. Take that copy. Everything going all right, Dick?"

"Looks O. K., Harry."

Reddy in the meantime had collected the loose sheets of copy on the table, picking up with them the stenographer's report which, Hoffman fondly believed, was reposing in his innermost pocket.

"Say, Mr. Day, which of these goes to the office?"

"The one written in pencil, you fool. Can't you see the other's typewritten?"

"Well, I'm not supposed to——" began Reddy. But at a threatening gesture from Day, he started from the room on the run, pausing long enough at the door to make a most astonishing face.

"Anything special doing, so far, Harry?" said Dick.

"They've reached the franchises, and it will be a case of gag rule and jam them through."

"Well, we'll put them all on record first. Just leave it to me," said Dick, going into the Council Chamber.

"You don't mind my leaving this door open a bit, do you, Mr. Day?" said a policeman, who was temporarily guarding the sacred portal. "I believe you could cut the air in here with a knife."

"Fire away," said Day. "I'd rather you did."

Again the drawling voice of the clerk came clearly into the room:

"An ordinance for the granting of certain rights in the streets for gas mains, pipes,

street lighting, and other purposes, hereinafter named, to the United Gas Company, a corporation organized under the laws of the State of New Jersey."

"Third reading of the ordinance. Will the clerk proceed?" came the president's voice. Whitelaw, Shanley and O'Hearn stood behind Day eagerly listening.

"Mr. President."

"Alderman Higgins."

"I wish to offer an amendment. The clerk will read the amendment."

"Mr. President." At the sound of this voice O'Hearn nudged Shanley with a grin.

"Alderman O'Hara."

"Mr. President," continued O'Hara, "there is a minority in this Council who ain't a lot better than a band of pirates and anarchists."

This eloquent outburst was greeted with an astounding demonstration of yells, howls and catcalls. For several moments the pounding of the gavel was the dominant note. When quiet had been, in a measure, restored the voice of the president was heard in dignified remonstrance:

"If there's any further rough-house in them galleries I'll have them cleared out."

"Clear out yourself," chanted the gallery.

"There's a fine band of cutthroats," commented O'Hearn.

"This is going to be a merry little party, gentlemen," said Harry Day, turning to Whitelaw, as he hurried back into the Council Chamber.

"Proceed, Alderman O'Hara," continued the president's voice.

"This minority, Mr. President, will try to delay action on this ordinance by introducing a bunch of amendments, and I move you that all amendments offered be referred to the committee on streets and privileges and that the Council take a recess while the committee meets and prepares a report."

"Second the motion."

"Mr. President!" "Mr. President!" came in several voices.

"Alderman Anderson."

"I move the previous question."

Again pandemonium broke loose. Yells of "Gag rule!" "Throw him out," "Call for the yeas and nays" were prominent above the din.

"You've heard Alderman O'Hara's motion. All in favor say 'Aye,'" screamed the president.

Eighteen voices answered "Aye."

"Contrary, 'No.' "

Fourteen voices answered "No."

"Motion carried. Council will take a recess for the committee to meet."

Amid a fresh uproar from the gallery, Dick Wells came into the room, closing the door behind him.

"So, Mr. Whitelaw, it's to be gag-rule with your puppets. When you can't use the stiletto, you try to use the big stick."

"My dear young man, I've nothing to do with it."

"Don't forget. One stroke of Hoffman's pen will block it all." He went rapidly down the stairway.

"My eye," said O'Hearn, "when he falls out of that balloon and hits the ground he'll come an awful thud."

"The committee meets here, doesn't it?" said Whitelaw. "Then I'll leave. It's all right? I mean the committee?"

"With us to a man."

A crowd of men, made up of politicians, clerks, members of the committee, with Shanley, Harry Day and Wells, filled the room. There was an exchange of greetings, some chaffing and laughter, until O'Hara took the

seat at the head of the table and rapped for order.

“The committee will come to order. Clerk, call the roll.”

“Alderman Kelaschensky.”

“Here.”

“Alderman Muschenheimer.”

“Here.”

“Alderman Anderson.”

“Here.”

“And Chairman O’Hara.”

“Here.”

“Mr. Chairman,” said Alderman Anderson, “I move the committee go into executive session.”

“Second the motion,” said Alderman Kelaschensky.

“All in favor of the——” began O’Hara.

“One moment, Mr. Chairman,” said Wells. “I wish to protest.”

“By what right do you butt in to this business?” said O’Hara coarsely.

“By the right of any citizen of the city who favors honest government.”

“I don’t think you pay any tax, unless it’s the liquor tax,” said Alderman Anderson.

Loud laughter greeted this sally.

“If I drank in your joint, Pinky,” re-

torted Dick, "it wouldn't help the liquor tax any. You haven't paid yours for years." And then he added, addressing himself once more to the chairman: "I make this protest in the name of the Independent League. Now you can go ahead."

"All right. We'll make a note of your objection. I now declare the committee in executive session. Let the room be cleared."

"Boys," he said, "we've got to sit here for ten or fifteen minutes, just as a matter of course. There's more than forty of them damned amendments, the clerk tells me. We're all agreed on the subject, I guess, so at the end of a quarter of an hour we'll report 'em all unfavorably, and recommend the ordinance be passed as it stands."

This statesmanlike suggestion was received with favor by the three worthies, who proceeded to pass the time devoted to the public business with the brand of persiflage affected by their class. At the end of the executive session, they passed once more into the Council Chamber, leaving the doors open behind them. For the second time during this eventful evening Wells encountered Hoffman.

"You've sent your message to the clerk?"

“Yes.”

“Good. They’re going to jam it through without debate. But we’ll nail them. We’ll nail them. What’s the matter, Hoffman? You look sick.”

“It’s so damn close in here. I’m all tired out,” said Hoffman, sinking in a chair.

“I know it’s been a hard fight,” said Dick soothingly. “But it means a lot to both of us. Buck up, old man; it’s nearly over now; and it’s been worth the fight.” With a parting friendly slap on the shoulder, he hurried back into the Council Chamber.

The voice of the clerk could be heard calling the roll. The first half dozen responses had invariably been in the affirmative.

“Alderman Higgins.”

“No.” This was the signal for another demonstration from the gallery. Shouts of “There’s an Independent voter,” and “He hasn’t sold out,” rewarded the courageous Higgins.

“Alderman Muschenheimer.”

“Mr. President, I rise to explain my vote.”

“There’s only one explanation,” came in Dick’s ringing voice. “Vote ‘No’ and you’re

a man. Vote 'Yes' and you're a thief."

"He's right," "Robber," "Grafter," "Crook," howled the gallery.

"Alderman Williams."

"No, a thousand times, no."

At this, all effort to maintain even a semblance of order was abandoned. Amidst howls and screams and imprecations, the clerk continued to call the roll and, having by a supreme effort succeeded in communicating to the president that the completed roll stood eighteen yeas and fourteen nays, that gentleman declared the ordinance passed, amidst a continued demonstration.

Again the little committee room was filled with those who were vitally interested in the action of the Council. Dick crossed once more to the side of the Mayor, who was sitting as he had left him.

"You've sent your message?"

Hoffman nodded.

"The clerk will read a communication from his Honor, the Mayor," said the voice of the president.

Wells moved toward the door of the Council Chamber, nervously rolling a cigarette. As the message proceeded, incredulity, astonishment, consternation and anger suc-

ceeded each other in his face. He did not observe the half dozen policemen who, crowding into the committee room, formed a group near the door.

"To the Honorable, the Common Council:  
"Gentlemen: I have received from your honorable body an ordinance passed by you, No. 28,672, for the granting of a franchise to the United Gas Company. I am amazed and disturbed by the wave of hysterical revolution that threatens the constitution. Municipal ownership means the sale of millions of dollars' worth of valuable property at such sacrifice as an irresponsible government may demand and this is paramount to confiscation. This I consider revolutionary; un-American and unlawful. I, therefore, return this ordinance with my official approval that it may become a law. Augustus Hoffman, Mayor."

There was a moment of absolute silence and then the storm broke. The door leading to the Council Chamber was once more closed by the police. Wells stood locking and unlocking his hands. He shook as with an ague; his mouth was stupidly agape. His gaze never left Hoffman, who continued to mop his brow and seemed on the verge of

collapse. The roars from the gallery of the Council Chamber were now answered by other roars from the street below.

"You've sold out." He pointed an accusing finger. "You've sold out. You've joined that gang of bandits;" he indicated Shanley and O'Hearn with his head. "I don't know the price they've paid you, but what of the price you've got to pay? What are you going to say to them down there in the street? You liar, you thief, you grafter, you traitor. You've got to answer them, you know. You've chosen to be bought by this select coterie of good citizens, but you'll have to explain your choice."

"Put him out," said Shanley violently to an officer.

"Don't lay a hand on me," said Dick.

A bugle call penetrated through the roar from the streets below.

"Good God," said Day from the window, "the troops are charging the mob. It's a riot sure."

"The troops?" said Dick, continuing to address Hoffman. "So that's part of your game, is it? Well, Hoffman, you'll answer the people and you'll answer them now."

He rushed to the chamber doors and,

throwing both of them violently open, shoving aside a policeman to do so, called to the gallery:

“Men, come here.”

They came, crowding to the door and surging into the room.

“There sits the man whom you put into office to protect your homes, your families, your rights, your liberties and your property. There sits the man who made an oath to God Almighty that he would do all of this. Well, he’s sold out. He’s betrayed your trust, he’s outraged decency and delivered you, bag and baggage, to those thieves there. Ingrate, traitor, liar, thief, grafter. The hot contempt of all decent men will brand those words on your forehead forever.”

“It’s a lie! it’s a lie! it’s a lie!” screamed Hoffman. “Clear the room, drive them out. Call your men, Sergeant.”

“Here come the police!” shouted Dick. “Come on, all of you! What he can’t do one way he’ll do another. He can’t face us himself, so he sends for others to help him.”

In the midst of the riot that ensued, for, on the order of the police sergeant, his squad charged the crowd at the door, Shanley and O’Hearn fought their way to the side of the

half-fainting Mayor. Back and forth surged the crowd and the police. Chairs were broken. One was hurled through the window into the street below. Heads were broken. Men were knocked down and, screaming imprecations, were trampled as they lay. In the end the more disciplined organization won. Slowly the maddened crowd was forced back through the door. Wells was elevated on the shoulders of his friends. For the moment he was insane with rage. He continued to scream: "Liar!" "Traitor!" "Thief!" even after the doors were forcibly closed.

"Good God," said O'Hearn, mopping his face streaming with blood and sweat, "another party like this and I shall go back to the farm."

"Lend a hand; help me get this fool down the back way to the auto," said Shanley.

## CHAPTER XVII.

It is a truism as old as the hills and not discovered by the late Lord Chesterfield, as some people fondly believe, that every man, no matter how strong he may be, has his little vulnerable point of vanity and weakness. Hence the legend of Achilles' heel. Moreover, no matter how long and how successfully, inspired by devilish cunning, he may conceal it from his masculine friends, some clever woman is sure to discover it in time. Then it all depends upon how much she may be interested in the unfortunate man as to what use she may put her uncannily acquired knowledge. Women see through each other far more readily. Is it because the Eternal Feminine is always playing the same Eternal Game?

Alice Whitelaw, therefore, was possibly the only person who was not in the least astonished when her friend, Miss Emerson, announced upon the termination of her visit, a few days after the frustrated excursion to the City Council Chamber, where the young ladies had once more encountered Mr. Harry

Day, that she had made up her mind to remain in the city for an indefinite period.

It appeared that Miss Kate had suddenly discovered that her undeniably pleasing contralto voice gave promise of better things than she had ever dared to hope. She had, it appeared, by what devious methods she omitted to mention, succeeded in getting an opportunity to warble a ballad before a noted prima donna, who chanced to be singing at her home. She had been strongly advised to take up the study of music seriously and it had been hinted darkly—at least, Kate hinted darkly—that for her there was a future in which the contraltos now basking in the smiles of a fickle public and enjoying fame and fortune would be compelled to hide their diminished heads and confine their artistic efforts to the home circle and the Victor talking machine.

Miss Emerson therefore announced her immediate determination to follow the sage advice of her monitress and begin at once the cultivation of her voice under the accomplished tuition of a local celebrity. Fortunately, she had no one but herself to consult. She was an orphan, still under the ostensible guardianship of an old friend of her father,

who considered that, in regularly doling out to his ward one-twelfth of her slender allowance on the first day of each month and enclosing with the check a stereotyped remonstrance upon extravagance in general and upon feminine extravagance in particular, which, to do Kate justice, she never read, he was fulfilling his duty in a manner to place him beyond criticism if not to excite admiration.

Miss Emerson declined gently but firmly to consider the Whitelaw mansion in the light of home during the protracted period of her novitiate. No, she would meet with too many temptations of a social nature; she was really entirely serious. She decided after consulting with Mary—it is just possible that in this she was a bit disingenuous—to place herself and her belongings under the tender, if irregular care of Mrs. Gridges.

Mr. Whitelaw, acting upon a genuinely generous impulse, was on the point of insisting upon defraying the expenses of the experiment himself, at least until the still open question of Kate's future success should be tested by several terms of lessons. But he got no further with the project than a tenta-

tive hint. Storm signals were plainly visible in his daughter's eye. In matters of private beneficence Alice had long since assumed direction and control. Her father supposed her opposition arose from some purely feminine point of view on the subject of delicacy. It could all be arranged most simply. Let Alice herself nominally assume the obligation: the most carping critic could find nothing at which to cavil in the rich Miss Whitelaw extending a hand to a less fortunate friend. But when, later in the day—his check had come at the breakfast table—he approached Alice on the subject, he was greeted with that lady's scornful laughter.

"You dear old goose. Not one cent shall you contribute—at least not yet. Kate tells the truth only insofar as she calls the whole thing an experiment. But the experiment is not with her voice. If she is successful, you'll have to contribute alright, but in another form."

Nor would she interpret this Delphic utterance further. Mr. Whitelaw shook his head sadly and wondered afresh at the nature of women. A day or two later he approached Mary in search of further light. But Mary only giggled good naturedly.

"Don't you think it rather queer that Kate never discovered this wonderful voice years ago?"

"At what age should the venerable Kate have discovered it? To hear you girls talk one would think she were ninety in place of under twenty. Besides it was only last month that Nordica heard her. Heavens! You women!" And then he dismissed the matter from his mind.

To state just how both Alice and Mary had arrived at the certain knowledge that the fair Kate had really fallen head over heels in love with Harry Day would be to confess to a familiarity with necromancy.

And, as for the unconscious victim destined to the altar of matrimony, he was as unaware of the high fate marked out for him as the unborn babe. Had any one suggested to him that any woman in the world could possibly have cast upon him the eye matrimonial, he would have laughed him to scorn and had him in derision. Truly, he was a great catch, he was! With his fatal gift of beauty and his twenty-five dollars a week!

As it chanced, he had recently moved to Mrs. Gridges' establishment. His former landlady had married a traveling salesman,

and, it was to be presumed, felt the Call of the Road. Therefore, at this particular moment he was, as it were, more panoplied against the assaults of the tender passion than in his normal state of mind. At least he thought he was.

For two days after Kate's arrival he did not once appear at Mrs. Gridges' hospitable board. That lady volunteered the opinion that he was out of town, but, as an anchor to windward, she added that he might be in town after all. Men nowadays were so unreliable and dissipated. Her tone implied that to absent oneself from one of her meals was in itself a dissipation. Kate felt inclined to agree with her. But with the confidence born of the knowledge that she had pitched her tent at the very seat of supplies, she possessed her soul in patience. It was at luncheon that they first met, to Day's no small astonishment.

"Miss Emerson, by all that's wonderful! To what happy chance do I owe this pleasure?"

"Oh, I'm living here now," said Kate. "You see, I've begun some rather serious work which will probably keep me in town for several months. Then I may have to go

East. Alice wanted me to stay on with them, but I really couldn't do that. I'm a poor, weak creature, and I'm sure I should throw up the whole thing if I were to remain in such a butterfly atmosphere."

"And so you thought you'd join the grubs for a time. Well, I'm none the less grateful, although my vanity suffers from the motive."

"You know I didn't mean it that way at all. By the way, have many young ladies been placing themselves under your wing at public meetings lately? If they have, I hope you have exhibited more—firmness, shall I say?—with the dragons in the guise of Mr. Shanley than you did the night you basely abandoned us."

Of course he protested and the conversation continued at a lively pace throughout luncheon.

"I shall not have the pleasure of seeing you again to-night, as I have an assignment to a public dinner. May I hope to find you here to-morrow at dinner time? I don't often happen in at noon."

"Sorry," said Kate, "but unfortunately I'm dining out to-morrow. Even the most steadfast must relax occasionally."

As a matter of fact, she had no engagement

whatever, but she knew the value of absence upon occasion. She would invite herself to the Whitelaws. He didn't happen in often at noon, didn't he? Well, he should acquire the habit.

Kate's plan of attack consisted in no small measure of a very insidious, if not entirely novel assault on the man's vanity. Like most men with a keen sense of humor, Day was fond of the pastime of exercising his faculty. Now it is impossible to do this without an audience. And he scorned to play to the gallery by wasting his gifts on a boarding-house dinner table. Consequently his strength became his weakness, and Kate's most salient characteristic, her carbonated giggling, which would have moved some men to womanslaughter, came quite gratefully to Day's ears. For she at least giggled in the right places, whereas the other inhabitants of Mrs. Grides' house simply gaped, their open mouths causing an irregularity in their faces something like a knothole in a pine board.

Miss Emerson, therefore, was equipped with weapons of whose efficacy she had only a faint idea. They were quite different from those which she considered to be her strong-

est. Moreover—and of this she was entirely unaware—she furnished an effective foil to his conversation. Her own was possibly one of the last to which one would apply the epithet “bright” or “brilliant.” But its cacchinary frothiness was of the kind that gave him good openings into which he rushed headlong.

He could not quite account for his pleasure when he eventually did find himself sitting next to Kate on the evening after her self-sought dinner at the Whitelaws. He had even caught himself once or twice during the day mildly looking forward to the meal, particularly as he had taken his food the evening before sitting in a veritable draught of small-talk of true boarding-house brand that blew him into absolute silence.

“How does it happen that no society is giving a dinner to-night?” she asked. “I thought a newspaper man never had to pay for his own dinner unless he wanted to.”

“I fear there exists in this town the most inhuman indifference whether the Moulders of Public Lack of Thought ever get any dinner at all. In fact I believe most people would be surprised to learn that we indulge in the vulgar habit of eating. It is not sur-

prising when one reads some of the editorials that are printed. And, anyway, not even the joy of eating at somebody else's expense could cause me to miss the far too rare bliss of having my food enhanced by your charming society."

"Please don't say those things to me when I'm unprepared for them," said Kate.

"Please don't expect me to believe that you aren't in the habit of hearing such sentiments expressed so often that you are almost growing to think they're true."

"I hate you."

"Now really, Miss Emerson, you mustn't make love to me so openly. I am an extremely susceptible youth and such flattery as that is altogether irresistible. Think how aghast you would be if I were to succumb!"

Now the feline part of that young woman's femininity was a healthy and well-developed function and, as she owed him a scratch, she did not fail to penetrate the chink in his armor. "I never think about unprofitable subjects," she said with almost splendid indifference.

"Wow!" said Day.

"How is Mr. Wells getting on with his

fight to close the stores?" she asked presently.

"To close the stores? Fight? What stores?"

"Why, I thought those poor people he is working so hard for are always clamoring for something like that, aren't they? I'm sure I don't know what it means, but it sounds like that."

"The closed shop!" gasped Day. "Shades of Mr. Gompers. Er—I think Dick is beginning to find out the difference between Socialism and Socialists."

"What is the difference? I thought they wanted to blow everybody up or—"

"No, I rather think what they want is to 'shake everybody down.' The difference between Socialism and Socialists is that one is remote but desirable and the other's not remote enough and very undesirable."

"Oh, you and your phrases! I didn't want one of those. I wanted you to tell me something I can understand. And I think it's a shame of you to laugh at Mr. Wells. I think it's perfectly splendid of him to give up his newspaper career and go in for that settlement work."

"Settlement work! Are you sure you don't mean the Salvation Army?" said Day when

he had recovered from his bewilderment. The comprehensiveness of her lack of comprehension was beginning to delight as much as it astounded him. He had not thought a girl capable of being so thorough even in that quality. She replied to his mild jeers by expressing a passionate longing to mangle him in seventeen different ways. So altogether Mr. Harry Day rose from the table feeling that he had enjoyed his dinner.

Kate for her part was equally satisfied. She reflected that she certainly had succeeded in amusing him. Vaguely she sensed that his mirth had been at her just as much as with her. And while she was not exactly capable of any Circean feats of intuition or analysis, she realized that she had heightened his appreciation of himself. She had afforded him scope for his mild and harmless, though rather youthful cynicism and had allowed him to have cause to be pleased with himself.

Now to be pleased with oneself is a state of mind that brings much good-will for the person in whose company it is realized. It is knowledge of this that gives some women such an unfair advantage over men in such a task as Miss Emerson was undertaking. Although that comely young person was not

what the most charitable could describe as even mildly intellectual or even keen sighted, she had a dim conception of the weaknesses through which her quarry could be brought down and bagged. She knew that it was necessary that he should be entertained while he was in her presence. She found out in a few days that she could manage this as long as she made no efforts whatever to alter her natural mode of thought and speech.

Once or twice she made industrious and disheveled efforts to conduct a serious conversation. She started to discuss Sudermann, who, somebody told her, had written a play; Mr. Bryan, whom she understood to be a senator or a preacher or something, and the last message of Mr. Roosevelt. In this topic she was quite sure of her ground; it dealt with suicide and when Miss Kate expressed her hearty support for the President in his protest against that immoral custom, she glowed with consciousness of her own virtue both in having such worthy sentiments and in elevating the conversation. Day found that the continued suppressing of volcanic laughter was uncomfortable for one's insides and interfered with one's digestion. So, from being amused at first, he soon realized that it

was too exhausting a pastime. His stolid face demonstrated this to Kate, who immediately abandoned her conscientious and perilous flights into the atmosphere of the Higher Conversation.

For this the young man was duly grateful. In his more callow days he had had the misfortune to be introduced into a set the female members of which had the irremediable reputation of being clever. They not only never recovered from this disaster, but they tried to enroll him also in their number. For a while he had been greatly impressed, then bewildered and finally wearied. The experience had been useful, as it had prevented his letting his attention be diverted from his work. Concerning the latter he had no illusions, but he realized that it was necessary, not merely for the present "feeding of the brute," but his future liberation and advancement to a more lucrative and congenial sphere. It also had made him very careful about the feminine society he chose, to such an extent, in fact, that he became exceedingly chary about meeting any women at all. And the consequence of all this was that he found Kate's unabashed, even ingrained superficiality and frothiness actually refreshing.

There is no work so trying to the nerves as that of a reporter. And, after a particularly annoying afternoon, during which the men he had to see were persistently out when he called, with the result that he had failed to accomplish any of his three assignments owing to his conscientious endeavors to cover them all, he would enjoy the girl's light effervescent chatter with relief.

"Miss Kate," he had, almost unconsciously, advanced to that stage, "my City Editor, to show his appreciation of my high critical faculties and erudition, has begged me to go to the theatre to-night and wield my trusty typewriter for the elevation of the American drama. Won't you lend me the aid of your scholarly experience and keen feminine wit?"

"If you mean, will I go to the theatre with you, I'll go, as you would vulgarly say, 'like a duck.' No, I don't mean it literally. And I think you're trying to be sarcastic and I think you're horrid, so you needn't think I'm going for any other reason except to pay you out. What's the play?"

Day mentioned the title of the most popular play of the period in which a well-known actress was starring.

"Oh, that'll be lovely," exclaimed Kate. "I've heard the play is simply sweetly thrilling. Isn't that the one in which she shoots herself because her husband's dead, or because her husband won't die, or something like that?"

"No, from what I have read about it, it contains no bloodshed in any such good cause," replied Day. "In fact I believe they all marry and live happy ever after. I fear your Ibsenitish desires will not be glutted this evening. But never mind. You can come home and kill me when it's all over. Don't do it now, or I shan't give you the tickets."

"I'm sure there are times enough when I long to."

Of course Mary, Alice and Mr. Whitelaw were at the theatre that night and, although the play seemed to hold their interest, Mr. Whitelaw observed that their eyes often strayed from the drama taking place on the stage proper. There was a more intimate one taking place in the seats of the orchestra circle. They exchanged many meaning glances.

All this time, to do Kate justice, she was working hard and seriously at her lessons. Her teacher was encouraging, but of course

a sufficient time had not elapsed in which to give a fair opinion as to whether the fair Kate had really a career in front of her or not. There were moments when she herself would have been put to it to tell whether she really desired it or not.

She found herself alternately indulging in two day-dreams. In the first, of course, she was happily married to Day, subordinating herself to him in every particular, encouraging and stimulating him in his career on the thorny path to authorship. She saw herself, the goal once attained, as being pointed out as the faithful helpmeet to whom the great man owed his success. She hadn't quite decided as to whether or not she had better become a helpless invalid as a result of having given too abundantly of her strength, a noble victim of self-sacrifice. In her other dream she played a far more conspicuous part. Dying of unrequited love she was to enjoy a brief but dazzling career as a great prima donna, richly endowed with the gifts for tragic expression. No such combination of histrionic power with beauty of voice would ever be known upon the lyric stage. And then, in the midst of this meteoric success, she would suddenly die of the aforesaid

broken heart. Between two such splendid dreams, is it any wonder that Kate hesitated? Then too, it must be confessed that she felt that it would not be quite right to decide in favor of either without at least consulting Mr. Day. It was the courtesy due to a co-artist.

And as for Harry Day himself, while perhaps he hadn't reached the point where matrimony seemed imminent, lulled into a state of false security, it must be confessed that he had begun to contemplate it. Twenty-five dollars a week, and that secured only by the uncertainties of newspaper life, was hardly a justifiable income upon which to commit wedlock. Still, he had begun, irregularly and tentatively, to send things to the Eastern papers. So far he had met with a fair measure of success. Look at the fellows who had succeeded, with no greater opportunities and perhaps with no better natural equipment. Who knew? The time might be ripe for a new and fresher Mr. Dooley or George Ade. Supposing a fellow should seriously think about marrying and settling down? It was a damned good idea. And it didn't necessarily mean he was going to do it Tuesday week, argued this innocent young man with himself.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

In a shabby quarter of the town which had once, in an earlier day, been the fashionable residential neighborhood, equally far removed from Horace Whitelaw's splendid mansion and John Shanley's ornate excursion into the architectural unknown, stood a shabby frame house which had once been the home of the city's first mayor. The ground floor had long since been given over to a grocer's shop. The second and third floors had been altered to serve the purpose of lodge rooms. The second floor was occupied by the principal Working Men's Club of the town. The top floor was used for the meetings of the general committee of the Committee of Seventy, which had played so prominent a part in the late campaign. One end of the room was occupied by a raised platform on which stood a flat desk, which, upon this particular occasion, served as a reporters' table for Harry Day, Charles Wilbur and Herbert Pritchard.

"I wish," said Pritchard, "that if they're

going to do anything at all they'd begin. I have done everything I could possibly do to keep awake. There are twenty-one charters of the various unions on these splendid walls and I have already committed fourteen of them."

"Shut up," said Day, "they're here for business of some sort, alright; and unless I'm 'way off my guess, you won't get a chance to sleep for some time."

It was the meeting of the sub-Committee of Seventy. All the chairs around the long table which occupied the center of the room were filled with men typical of the working class. In other chairs around the wall, most of them tilted back on two legs, sat other members. At the center of the long table, pale, haggard and, apparently, deeply agitated, sat Richard Wells. The intense quiet which for some moments had been broken only by the conversation of Pritchard and Day only served to emphasize the suppressed excitement under which every man in the room was apparently laboring.

"Mr. Secretary, will you please read that resolution again," said Dick, addressing a man called Higgins.

Higgins rose to his feet and in a thin,

acrid voice, proceeded to read from a paper which he held in his hand:

“Resolved, That Augustus Hoffman, candidate of the Independent League and Mayor of the city, together with Richard Wells, chairman of its Committee of Seventy, are hereby finally and forever dishonorably read out of the party, charged as they both are with deliberately and criminally betraying their trusts by conspiring to pass and approve as laws the iniquitous ninety-nine years’ franchises granted to the United Gas Company and the Consolidated Traction Company respectively; and, that the Independent League repudiates them and stamps them as grafters, liars, oppressors, scoundrels and traitors and forever and finally holds them up as objects of contempt and scorn to all honest and decent men, women and children in this city, county and State.”

“I’ll bet Higgins wrote that himself,” whispered Pritchard, “there isn’t a word in the whole dictionary that he wouldn’t use, whether he knew what it meant or not.”

There was a long silence.

Twice Wells began to speak and twice his voice failed him.

“I protest,” he said, “in the first place, on

the ground that this resolution was introduced and debated before I arrived at the meeting."

"Under the circumstances, it was not expected that you would attend at all," said the chairman.

"It is to be presumed that the charges against me were preferred and the evidence submitted."

"Oh, yes."

"Who brings these charges?"

"I do," said a man seated on the right of the chairman.

"On what grounds? Surely you are going to give me the opportunity to refute them."

"That's only fair," said the man.

"Go ahead. Go ahead, Smith. Tell them what they are," cried a number of the others.

The man Smith rose slowly to his feet.

"I don't know how much money you received from the gas company direct——" he began in a rumbling bass voice.

"If you say I received one penny, directly or indirectly, you lie and you know you lie."

"You were at Whitelaw's house on the day the cornerstone was to be laid," said Smith doggedly.

"I told you I had been and I told you why."

"You had an interview with Whitelaw."

"A private interview," broke in another member.

"I don't deny it."

"Well?" said Smith, with the air of a man who presents an unanswerable argument.

"Didn't I tell you all about it?"

"But you didn't tell me why you went to Whitelaw's house at all."

"I went to make a call."

"On whom?"

"I refuse to answer."

"Why? What's the matter? Are you ashamed of it?" sneered Higgins.

"No, I'm not ashamed of it. I went to call on a young lady."

"Oh, that's to be the dope, is it?"

"Now look here," said Dick with a flash of anger, "I don't propose to allow this committee or any committee on God's green earth to drag that woman's name into this nasty mess. She's had nothing to do with it. I went to see her at Whitelaw's house because she happens to be employed there. Her people are old friends of the Whitelaws. It was while we were sitting in the drawing-

room talking that she mentioned to me that Whitelaw had told her that he would like to have a few minutes' conversation with me before I left the house. She also told me that he had read every word of my speeches made at the conventions. I couldn't imagine what on earth he wanted to see me about and said so plainly. Then she went and brought Whitelaw into the room. He was very smooth and polite, of course; you all know the way he has. I told him to his face that he couldn't possibly have anything to say to me that a third party, namely, this young lady, couldn't hear. He said, however, that he would prefer that no one else should be present. Like a fool I yielded the point. At my request the young lady went out and waited for me at the gate, as we had planned to go for a walk. I went into Mr. Whitelaw's room and was closeted with him, probably, about a quarter of an hour. I told you about the long song and dance he gave me about my being in all wrong and I answered him."

"Well, what did you answer?"

"That he couldn't make me any proposition that I would consider for a moment."

"That's all very pretty, but how about Hoffman?"

"Hoffman? Hell, I don't know anything about Hoffman. He certainly threw me about as hard as he did you. I never even suspected it."

"Ah," said Smith violently, "see here: I'm sick of this sort of talk. There's a woman mixed up in this deal; a woman this man's just daffy over."

"Stop, I tell you," thundered Dick, "I won't have her name dragged into this thing."

"And I say you must."

"Let's hear it all," "Go ahead, Smith," "We've got to get to the bottom of it," "It's too late in the day to have secrets," came from various parts of the room.

"I swear on my honor that you are about to drag into this scandal the name of an innocent woman."

"Your honor? Oh hell," said Higgins.

"Yes, my honor," repeated Dick.

"But," interposed the chairman, "if you weren't mixed up in it in any way, how do you know she didn't have a hand in it?"

"I can't tell you how I know, but I know."

"I'll tell you her name," said Smith.

"One minute," shouted Dick, "you shall not drag that girl's name into this mess."

Rather than have that happen, I'll waive my defence and stand by that resolution."

"Then you admit it?"

"I still deny it."

"And you're not going to make any defence?"

"Not as long as you insist in implicating by name the girl you have referred to."

"Ah," said Smith springing to his feet, "the grafter admits it. He's as bad as Hoffman. He's guilty. Throw him out. I move the adoption of the resolution."

Several voices seconded the motion.

"Moved and seconded," began Higgins.

"Not so fast. Wait a minute. I intend to give the boy a chance to talk," said the chairman.

"That's right, Longerman. Bully for you," said Dick, leaping to his feet. "I want to talk. And you've got to listen to me now. You understand? You've got to listen to me."

There was a chorus of exclamations and interruptions, but the dogged Longerman, by dint of mere physical strength, beat down the opposition, pounding the table violently with a horny fist of a proportion to fell an ox. When a semblance of order was once

more restored, Dick resumed more quietly.

"When I said I didn't know about Hoffman's action I spoke the simple truth. I am innocent of it all, innocent of the faintest complicity with Hoffman. You ought to know, every one of you, that I wouldn't do a thing like that. After all that I have done for you and your party! When I joined you a year ago, what membership did you have? Not a baker's dozen. I have labored night and day for this party. Its cause has been my very life. You chose Hoffman as a candidate. Not one of you dares say that I favored the choice: I opposed him. But you thought that I hadn't enough grounds for opposition. I didn't know that he was vicious, I admit, but it seems to me that any one must know that he was weak. Good God! It's written all over his face. If I had wanted to be a grafter I wouldn't have needed to take money this way. Whitelaw himself offered me a position with him in his business, a thing which would have eventually made me a rich man. You know all about it: I told you at the time; but I wouldn't take it. I have given you my time, my strength, my brains, my very heart's blood. So you've got to believe me. So help me God, I can wash my

hands in innocence, since I had nothing to do with your betrayal."

Amid a storm of cries: "That's right," "Same old gag," "I don't believe it," and "It sounds good to me," which showed a divided delegation, Wells sat down.

"Ah," said Smith when he could make himself heard, "what kind of a cock-and-bull story is this, anyhow? I tell you, I'm damn sick of it. Whitelaw's hired this man to sneak into our organization and disrupt it and that's the God's truth of it."

"It's a lie," said Dick.

"It's the same old story: it's the way they always do. They never fight in the open, not they! They always stab in the back. It's the way they've broken unions for years, from the inside. I ain't got no sentiment in mine. The double cross is the double cross and we got ours. I'm through, I am."

"Same here, Higgins," said Smith.

"How do you know," Higgins went on, "but what he wants to stay in here just to hand us out another lemon when the time comes at next election? I'm an honest man, I am. I don't sneak around and call at Whitelaw's on any excuse and I ain't takin' any chance on a fellow who does."

"The resolution, the resolution!" "We don't want this to happen again; let's kick him out." The cries this time came from the back of the room.

"Ain't you got anything more you can say?" said the chairman.

"I have said all I can. You can believe it or not," said Dick somberly.

The chairman gave a despairing sign: "All in favor of the adoption of the resolution say 'Aye.' "

The resolution was carried, two-thirds of the delegates voting for it.

"The resolution is adopted," said the chairman.

"Mr. Chairman," said the implacable Higgins, "I move that we authorize the publication of this resolution in any or all of the papers. The chair may decide."

"Second the motion," said Smith.

"Those in favor——" began the chairman.

"May I have just one more word?" said Dick.

"Is there any objection?" began the chairman again. As none was offered, he nodded to Dick to proceed. This time Wells remained in his chair. He spoke without excitement in a clear, low voice.

"You are about to send me before the world with the brand of a scoundrel and a thief. May God Almighty forgive you! You are killing the last chance, in this town at least, of a decent man espousing your cause. I tried to lead you to better conditions, better homes, a decent place in the world. And for reward you stab me in the back. I have had plenty of warning, God knows! That of all the ingratitude in the wide world, that of the downtrodden, the oppressed, the weak and ill-treated, was the basest, the most cruel and unwarranted toward any one who tried to help them. I combated this opinion. I appealed against this judgment. I was wrong; you have proved me so. For you I sacrificed a chance for a career, what the world calls a position in life; in short, everything. Now you can go ahead. My conscience at least is clear."

"You have heard the motion," said the chairman. "All in favor say 'Aye.' "

And again the two-thirds vote carried it.

"The committee stands adjourned."

Slowly, conversing in low tones, the delegates left the room. Wilbur and Pritchard covered an embarrassed silence with much rustling of papers. At length they, too, took

their departure. Wells remained seated in front of the table, looking straight out into vacancy. Day waited for some little time and then, crossing the room, laid his hand on his friend's shoulder. In his hand he carried a sealed envelope.

“Oh, Dick.”

“Yes, Harry!”

“I’m sorry that I have to add a little to your troubles. You’ve got one man’s load for the present. But Mary returned your note. She wouldn’t even open it. Here it is.”

A new expression of pain came into Dick’s sad face. With a slight motion of his hand he indicated that Day should lay the note on the table.

“What was it Whitelaw said?” he said, speaking more to himself than to Day. “That I must come back? And when I did he’d let down a fence rail and give me a little corner in the cool of the meadow.”

“Don’t take it so hard, old man. I mean about this dirty-shirt bunch. I told you they would turn on you and hand it to you some day.”

“I know you did. Still even I can’t altogether blame them. It certainly looked rather black.”

"And then there's Mary."

"There was Mary."

"Well, do you know I've a shrewd suspicion that there's a chance of there still being Mary."

"What do you mean?"

"Dear old pal, while you were making that plea to these peanut agitators and second-rate walking delegates, I let you and them go through with it just to demonstrate to you what a lot of sneaks they are."

"I know how you feel, old man."

"But what you don't know is this. I could have shut them up at any moment."

"You could have what?"

"Dick my boy, Providence is sometimes fond of keeping us poor mortals guessing. Therefore why, unless for our bewilderment, Providence should grope around for a champion and, nabbing on to the red-headed office boy of a newspaper, select him as its instrument of vengeance, passes my comprehension. But this is what Providence did this time, anyway."

"Will you stop raving and come to the point?"

"Well," said Day, drawing a soiled, type-written document from his pocket, "on the

night Hoffman threw you down somebody accidentally dropped this paper on my desk and Reddy Smith accidentally picked it up and later on I accidentally collared him and made him disgorge."

"What is it, what is it?"

"Read for yourself."

With an air of jaunty lightness a little too elaborate to be genuine, Harry Day lighted a cigarette and proceeded to whistle the latest music-hall ditty with correctness and precision. But he watched his companion's face lighten and the old gleam return to his somber eyes with a wide and joyous grin.

"Good God! The goods! Seventy-five thousand dollars and—other considerations. Harry!" he shouted, "do you know what this means? It means that we've got the whole gang just where we want them. Go back to the office. You'll be sure to hear from me before long. And I think I'll have a story for you."

"Where you going, Dick?"

"I? Oh, I'm going up to call on Whitelaw. You know I've got the habit," and he fairly ran through the door.

## CHAPTER XIX.

Beneath an exterior that was light, not to use a harsher word, in Alice Whitelaw, there was a cool, keen brain, her inheritance from her father and a warm, loyal heart, which may have been her portion from her mother. On this eventful evening by a happy chance they were dining quite alone. Even Miss Whitelaw was absent from the family circle. Alice felt a decided pleasure in the prospect. They had been going at a great pace of late. The Leader of Society had been up and doing with a vengeance and had entertained more than ever before. Already the rays of Mrs. De Forest's sinking social star shone faintly above the sky-line. Then, two of Alice's friends had been married within a week of each other, which had, of course, entailed an uninterrupted line of entertainments of one sort and another for days before and after the great events.

It seemed, therefore, delightfully peaceful to have her father and Mary all to herself once more and then, riotous and dissipated

thought! She might even be able to get to bed by ten o'clock and make up a little of her lost beauty sleep. Her maid had gotten her into a pretty, simple dinner dress with unusual expedition, prompted, possibly, by the fact that she was to have a night off. Consequently Alice found herself ready for dinner a full half hour before the time. On the way downstairs to the library she caught up half a dozen long-stemmed roses from a vase on the table. They were a portion of the plunder she had secured at last night's German. As she passed her father's dressing room she could hear him whistling to himself. That meant that the coast would be clear for ten minutes at least. She would take this opportunity to see if all the flowers in his room were quite fresh the way he liked them.

Poor Father! She had been forced to neglect him a bit of late, but, what with the late hours every night, breakfast in bed and an endless succession of luncheons, receptions and teas, she had not been able to perform her home duties properly but had been compelled to entrust them to the uncertain memory of the parlor-maid. Upon inspection, things looked rather better than she had hoped. However, she decided to add her

posies to the ones on her father's table. As the stems were still too long, armed with a large pair of silver scissors lying on the table, she opened the side door and went out on to the veranda in order to cut them.

Along the avenue came two men, one on either side of the street, calling an extra edition of the *Evening Globe* and of its great rival, the *Times*. How they ever contrived to speak a language so much like English, or rather, to phrase it more accurately, so little like any other language that one inferred it was English, and yet be perfectly unintelligible, was a miracle. Alice, as a rule, had a supreme indifference to news as recognized by the papers. All the news of importance she knew beforehand, namely, the small tattle of her world. To be sure, she read the headlines each morning in the paper, at least, those on the front page and then considered that her duty to the world at large had been conscientiously accomplished. As for buying an extra! She had never before done such a thing in her life. Probably it was all about some disgusting murder or some horrid accident at the mills which would make one quite ill in the hearing, let alone the reading. But, as the bawling rivals neared her, some sud-

den inexplicable impulse prompted her to call one of the men to her. As it happened, the man who reached her first was the *Times* man. Had she chanced to buy the *Globe* the news which met her eye would have been in a more softened form, owing to the skilful direction of Harry Day. But as this scandalous tit-bit concerned a former rival who had made himself greatly felt in the camp of the foe, the *Times* had naturally made the most of it.

“Richard Wells Kicked Out by Reformers!” “The Committee of Seventy Act and Act Quickly,” announced the *Times* in large scare heads. Alice needed no more. She could and would screen Mary from this a little longer. No doubt her father would be able to contrive some way of softening the blow if he could not ward it off altogether. Bidding the man wait while she went into the house for some necessary change, which was in a small coin purse on her own desk in the writing room, she departed in search of it. So it happened that she just missed seeing Mary from the window above the library door beckon to the man to toss to her one of his papers in exchange for a nickel wrapped in a piece of paper which she threw down to him. Was it that her ears were the quicker, that

she had been able to catch the gist of the jargon? Or was it, as in Alice, that intangible instinct upon which women pique themselves with slight foundation, which, like the arquebus of the Middle Ages, misses fire entirely more often than it goes off. It goes without saying that no record of such untimely events ever records itself upon the feminine mind.

And so Fate willed that in spite of the thoughtful efforts of kind friends, Mary had to have her black hour alone and unsuspected. She wondered dully if there was anything further she would have to bear. Was this the last bitterness of her cup she was draining now? Untrue to her, in that he chose to follow his own headstrong way, even at the cost of sacrificing her, the object of open suspicion and veiled contempt to the respectable portion of the community she had known him. And now, final, grotesque and ironic humiliation, he was openly denounced and abandoned by the very party to whose disreputable cause he had sacrificed her.

Once more she had the sense of one who sits in darkness. The panorama of all the careless, happy days of her youth in her beloved Southland swept before her eyes. So,

it is said, the drowning man reviews his life.

"Alice," said Whitelaw, as he came into the library, "where did you say your aunt was dining?"

"I believe the directorate of the Orphans' Home give a dinner to-night."

"Ah, then we will have a quiet dinner to-night, just we three. Where's Mary?"

"She hasn't come down yet. And, Father, before she comes, have you seen the evening papers?"

"I saw something of them before I came up."

"And you still refuse to discuss Mr. Wells?"

"What's the use?"

"Why, you know of course that I'm not personally interested. It's Mary I'm thinking of."

Whitelaw made a movement of impatience. "Alice, I have brought you up as best I could. I have denied you nothing that seemed to me reasonable."

"Why, you've given me everything in the world."

"I have never obtruded upon you or your aunt any of the perplexities of my business, have I?"

"I have sometimes wished you had."

"Well, that is beside the question. What I am trying to say is that I always have made it a point in my life to keep my home and my business life entirely separate. You understand this, don't you?"

"Certainly."

"Then, please, in this instance, leave Mr. Wells to me. I have become very fond of Mary. I appreciate her affection for Mr. Wells and I think you should trust me to bring about a happy conclusion to their affair. Only it must be at my own time and in my own way."

"That's all I want," said Alice, throwing her arms around his neck. "You are really a dear, good man. It seems as if you could do anything. I love Mary and I do so want her to be happy."

"If money could buy her happiness you should have it."

"You are the sweetest, kindest old father in the world. You really give me too much."

"It's worth all the struggle to let you have everything that can make you happy and contented. And besides, my dear, you are a woman now, and I can't hope to have you to myself much longer."

"You will always have me."

"Ah, not always. Some day there'll come along a fine young fellow and take you. And when he does come, you needn't be at all afraid, if he's all right. I'll be able to see that you're well taken care of."

"I suppose I shall be very rich, Father?"

"Well, you needn't be afraid of starving."

"Well," said Alice, "we won't talk any more about that now. For let me tell you one thing. That terrible young fellow of whom you are so afraid hasn't appeared up to the present time."

"Miss Emerson," announced Williams. Kate appeared in the doorway on the moment. With a tragic gesture—Kate had discarded all but tragic gestures—she indicated her gown, a pretty, light dinner dress.

"I've come to dinner," she said in a tone of which the late Mrs. Siddons need not have been ashamed.

"I'm so glad," said Alice. "But as this is a very quiet family party you will find none of us so gorgeous. What a pretty dress."

"Well, what's all the excitement about?" said Whitelaw, who never could learn, somehow, not to take Kate literally, if not seriously.

"Well, I suppose you know about Mr. Wells. I think it's just simply terrible. Of course, you've read the papers, but I know all the inside. Mr. Day—you remember Mr. Day, of the *Globe*—was to take me to the theatre to-night; we were going to Keith's, and you know, Alice, that I'm just simply crazy over vaudeville. And besides, Mr. Day is probably the most interesting man in the world. Well, what do you think? About an hour ago, after I had got all dressed up just to please him, he telephoned and called the whole thing off. Goodness, I don't think I've been so mad in all my life. I'll just let him have a piece of my mind. He said he would leave the seats at the box-office, but that he simply couldn't come, and then he told me all about Mr. Wells being publicly denounced and he said that there was going to be an awful rumpus to-night, somewhere or somehow, and he had to be on the job. He expressed it in just that inelegant manner. You know, Alice, he's so original and I'm just crazy about him. So here I am—waiting at the church—with two seats for the theatre and a bare possibility of meeting Mr. Day after the show and you, Alice, must go with me. Williams can take us down and bring us

home, can't he? My! I never talked so much in all my life."

At intervals, while Miss Emerson had been compelled to pause to catch a little breath, Whitelaw had made heroic but vain attempts to interrupt her.

"Now, if you will let me have a word, please?" he begged when she had finally run down.

"Why, certainly, Mr. Whitelaw," said Kate generously.

"Now, Father, be careful," said Alice.

"I propose," continued Whitelaw, "that you all go to the theatre, including Mary, and I will meet you after the performance and take you over to the Union Club for a bite to eat. How's that?"

"Well, I think that's just simply lovely," said Kate. "You know, I've just been crazy to go to the Union Club. And I think it will be perfectly fine, don't you, Alice?"

Alice, warned by her father's example and having seen unmistakable but familiar signs that Kate, being still in a fine conversational frenzy, was only asking questions for rhetorical effect, not in the least desiring or expecting answers, contented herself with a smiling nod.

"By the way," continued Kate, "where is Mary? Has she heard about Dick Wells? I know she was simply crazy about him. But if she had asked me—but she hasn't—I should say that she was probably better off without him, in spite of the fact that I'm perfectly insane about his eyes. Of course, Mr. Whitelaw, you must feel that way, too. Naturally, I don't mean about his eyes. But I should think you'd be perfectly crazy; he said such terrible things about you. But Mr. Day says—you remember Mr. Day, of the *Globe*—that he is such a fine fellow, although I can't see it at all, I confess. No one can ever account for a newspaper man's opinion. For, as Mr. Day says, nearly all of them, and as he includes himself, I don't see why he doesn't say all of them, are just a little 'dippy.' "

"Kate Emerson, what do you mean by 'dippy'?" Alice had at length achieved an interruption.

"That's the very word he used. And while he used it of all of them he was referring in especial to Mr. Wells."

"What did you say about Mr. Wells, Kate?" said Mary quietly. She had come into the room quite unnoticed.

"Why, Mary Calvert, I'm so sorry for you. Of course you've seen the evening papers?"

Alice made a protesting gesture.

"Yes, I've seen them."

"See here, Kate, don't you think it would be a good idea to complete the plans for your theatre party?" said Whitelaw.

"Yes, indeed," said Alice eagerly. "Mary, Kate is going to give us a theatre party to-night. And afterwards Father's going to take us to supper at the Union Club."

"Of course you're to be one of the party," said Kate. "Although goodness knows it's none of mine. It started by being Mr. Day's party—Mr. Day of the *Globe*, you remember—and then it got to be sort of Williams' party, as he was to take us, and now it's going to end up by being Mr. Whitelaw's party."

"Oh, not at all," said Whitelaw laughing. "I insist upon resigning. And I'm sure the excellent Williams will feel the same way. No, Kate, I must insist that this is your celebration."

"You'll come, won't you, Mary?"

"Thank you," said Mary, "I think I'd rather be excused to-night."

"Oh, I'm so sorry," said Kate. "Of course, I know just how you feel."

"Kate dear," interrupted Alice, "if you'll only come with me now you can help me get into another dress. Dinner won't be for ten minutes. And, Father dear, in honor of Kate's party, you would consent to hold dinner five minutes for me if I were late, wouldn't you?"

"I think I might nod for once," said her father.

"I don't suppose Kate Emerson ever had an unhappy hour in her life," said Mary, as the two girls left the room.

"She hasn't time to be unhappy, Miss Mary. She's too busy talking."

"She certainly seems to be absolutely care-free."

"I'm sorry you read the evening paper," he said, coming toward her.

"Thank you."

"I've had a plan growing in my head for some time," said Whitelaw, "to send Alice and Kate, and perhaps one or two other young people, to Europe for the summer with my sister."

"I'm sure that would be very delightful."

"I should want you to go with them."

"That is very good of you."

"You've been a bit downhearted lately.

Don't you think it might cheer you up?"

"Oh, I'll be all right in a little while. I'm not such a coward as all that."

"Miss Mary," he said, taking her hand.

"Yes, sir."

"Mr. Wells—Are you still friends?"

"No, sir."

"Do you ever hear from him?"

"Mr. Day brought me a note this morning. I sent it back unopened."

"Oh, I'm very sorry."

"Why?"

"I thought I might be able to do something for the young man, and that possibly it might soften you a bit."

"I don't see how it could. I have made a great mistake and now I must live through it. I can't be the only woman who ever did so. They must have lived through it. If they have, certainly I can."

"Oh, you're so young and therefore so hard in your judgments. Young men have made false steps before and good men will continue to go wrong until the end of time. It is never safe to come to a conclusion until you know all the circumstances that have precipitated the result."

"Oh, I'm a bit old fashioned, I suppose.

But I can't forget all my bringing up. I can't put all my traditions behind me. I can forgive most things, but never a man who has lied and betrayed. And I trusted him implicitly. Dear Mr. Whitelaw, please don't mention it again. I just want to try and forget."

"Dinner is served, sir," said Williams.

"Ah," said Mary, glad of the opportunity to escape, "please let me go and tell the girls."

During dinner Kate, to whom Alice had talked candidly, managed to avoid, with the exception of a few lapses, all conversational bypaths that led to Richard and his troubles or Mary and her sorrows. Casting about in her mind for subjects that promised safety, Alice hit upon one or two and, having launched Kate auspiciously upon the stream, let her sail away to what port she would. Of course, one of the first topics that suggested itself was Kate's career. While Alice at no time wished to deprecate Kate's natural talent, she took very little stock, as a matter of fact, in a serious career for her friend. Kate lacked stability and application. That she was studying really hard now Alice was both surprised and glad to learn. But that it

was more than a mere whim, of which the volatile Kate would soon weary, she declined to believe.

Therefore, when Kate mounted her high horse and assumed all the little airs and whims of a petted prima donna, Alice was vastly diverted.

"Of course, everything is quite different if one is a soprano," said Kate. "One finds it difficult to understand why they should be so terribly spoiled. Heaven knows there are plenty enough. Whereas, with a contralto voice, it's absolutely different. Even Madame Nordica admitted that. She said that there were so few really great contraltos living, notwithstanding most of the operas are written for the soprano and the tenor. So I was insisting just yesterday to Fabricati that obviously the only way to do if one had to make one's début in a hackneyed old part in a hackneyed old opera was to do something startlingly original. Now take the part of Siebel in 'Faust.' Fancy singing that absurd flower song which every hand-organ in the country plays. Of course it has to be done, but I don't know why that should prevent my introducing something more modern. I suggested 'The Rosary,' it's sort of like a hymn,

you know, and they're all Catholics, except Mephistopheles, and so all about the beads and the cross will be what Fabricati calls right in the picture. I spoke of it to Mr. Day. Of course, he hasn't the musical temperament, but he's very literary. He thought the idea was good, only he suggested 'Nearer, My God, to Thee' in place of 'The Rosary.' I pointed out to him that that was a Protestant hymn and then, of course, he saw that he was wrong."

Alice had succeeded, up to this moment, in maintaining a decent show of composure. But the thought of how Day must have looked while solemnly weighing the merits and demerits of the important question was too much for her. She laughed openly and frankly.

"Kate," she said, "you're simply too delicious. What did Fabricati say?"

"Oh, what would you expect her to say," said Kate indignantly. "She nearly had a fit. But what does she know about what's going on in the musical world to-day? She hasn't sung in public for nearly thirty years, and while I know that she's an admirable teacher, she's lost all style, really. Her voice is beautifully placed, of course. But her attack is bad."

"But what does she say about you yourself, Kate?" said Whitelaw seriously.

"Oh, you can't get her to say anything very definite just yet. She wants me to study two years with her and then perhaps a year in the East and then finish with Jean de Reszke. Of course, that's the old-fashioned way and I don't waste time arguing the matter. But at the end of five or six months more I shall either know whether my voice is powerful enough for the stage, in which case I shall go abroad at once, or I shall know that it is not sufficiently strong to make a public career possible. Of course, in that case I shan't waste any more time."

"What does Mr. Day advise?" said Alice slyly.

"Oh," said Kate with an air of abysmal experience, "he's like all the men I've ever met. What man ever cared what a woman did or could do? All he cares about is what she is."

"If you have ever met any men who know what any woman is, you're to be congratulated on having found an unique specimen," said Whitelaw. "All I've ever managed to do is to know what they seem to be and sometimes I'm in doubt about that."

"Oh, but Mr. Day's so clever," said Kate ingenuously. Whitelaw, Alice and Mary raised rather amused eyebrows, but that naïve young woman rushed along without noticing. "You know, I think there's nothing like newspaper work for making men clever."

"Really?" said Whitelaw in the tone of a man who was receiving information. "Those I have known have tried to give me to understand that it took clever men to make newspapers and not the other way around. There's an ingenuity about your idea that quite appeals to me. I shall mention it to the next reporter who comes to ask me for information which he knows he won't get."

Alice turned a warning glance toward her father. She was afraid that even Kate's almost pachydermatous comprehension would grasp the real point of his banter. But far from it. The future prima donna was wrestling with two ideas at once and the task proved rather herculean. She had to remember not to touch on any subject that might remind Mary of her grief and she also was quite interested in her meal, which at the Whitelaws was always worth one's attention.

"Mr. Day says you can always get infor-

mation, if it's very important that it shall not be told. He says that the leakiest people—he used that very word, you know he's so full of cute phrases like that—are always those to whom secrets are entrusted."

Whitelaw was about to ask whether Mr. Day had ever entrusted secrets to her, but he feared the question would be a little too pointed even for her. Besides, if Mr. Day had been so indiscreet, the question would have been quite unnecessary, as the information would have bubbled out of Kate like steam from a geyser.

"Does Mr. Day intend to make a career of newspaper work," he asked instead, "or is he just making it a stepping stone?"

"Oh, he wouldn't dream of it," was the reply. "He says only fools and knaves stay in the business. I'm sure I don't know why, but he says so. He says that the fools are the only ones who haven't sense enough to get out of it and the knaves are the only ones who can make a success of it."

As Whitelaw's experience with successful newspaper men was confined to Maynard and his like, he thought that Day had shown a keen, if unpolitic perspicacity.

When dinner was nearly over Alice asked:

"What time do you want to get to the theatre, Kate? The show itself doesn't start till about half-past eight, does it?"

"Oh, we'll miss the moving pictures if we don't get there before that. You know, they begin with moving pictures and I just dote on that part of a vaudeville show. I think it's just too killing for words when the crowd's chasing the man and the old woman falls in the river and the balloon comes along and upsets the baby in its perambulator."

"Then perhaps we'd better be starting."

"I'll tell Williams to serve the coffee for Miss Mary and me in the library," said Whitelaw. "You girls run up and put on your cloaks. I'll order the machine. It'll be around ~~a~~ a very few minutes and won't take more than a couple of winks in getting you down there. Andre is a pretty quick driver."

"Oh, it's just too exciting when he whizzes in front of street cars and shaves lamp posts. The other day when he took Alice and me out he was within an inch of carving the cow-catcher off the Pennsylvania Limited at the South Street crossing. Oh, the engineer was so mad. I think he'd like to have killed us all."

"H'm! I shall have to reason with Mr. Andre and explain that we'll do all the *felo de se* that's necessary in this family. Well, run along, run along. Come on, Miss Mary. We old fogies will seek to pass the evening in a manner more befitting our age and dignity." And then he held the door open for her as she preceded him into the library.

While waiting for the girls to get their wraps, Whitelaw paced the floor of the library puffing his cigar. Mary had seated herself in a big chair. Her head was thrown back wearily. The cloud of sadness, which had lifted somewhat during the idle chatter at the dinner table, had settled down once more upon her face. She was grateful to Whitelaw for his silence, although she saw that he would presently break it. For the moment she was seized with the impulse to join the girls in their theatre party. She could easily plead that she had changed her mind. And for the moment the lights, the glare, the noise and the moving pictures and Kate's endless chatter seemed easier to bear than a serious conversation, even with Mr. Whitelaw. But after all, would she gain anything by going? Would she not be merely postponing the evil day. She knew White-

law's determined character too well. If he had something that he purposed saying to her he could readily make the occasion, either at the supper, at the club, after the theatre or even after they got home.

As she watched him pacing the floor, puffing at his cigar, stopping now and then in front of the coffee urn to take a sip from his cup, she was reminded of their first tête-à-tête in this very room, of the night he had told her so much about the far-off days when his wife and her mother had been girls together; the night that he had extracted from her the promise, so soon to be broken, never to take a decisive step without consulting him. No, changing her mind would not save her. Her bad quarter of an hour was sure to come.

The silence was broken by the two girls "booted and spurred," as Whitelaw described it, coming into the library for a swallow of coffee before starting. Alice had the conversational reins firmly in her grasp this time. She was afraid that the spectacle of the abandoned Mary would start the hidden springs of Kate's sympathy afresh. Consequently, Kate was actually silent for a few moments before Mr. Whitelaw went himself

to see them tucked safely into the auto. With a parting kiss, Kate left Mary. In her wake, as from the funnel of a steamer, trailed an attenuated anecdote of which Mr. Day of the *Globe* seemed to be the subject.

"Surely he's far too clever to marry such a goose as Kate," thought Mary to herself. She remembered all the ardent things that Richard had recounted to her in testimony of his friend's ability. But then, after all, who could tell? Kate was undeniably pretty, and inexhaustibly good natured. To some men the mere detail of having a wife who was silly was of no importance. And then, as Day himself might have said, such a wife would never differ from him.

And then Mr. Whitelaw returned. He gave Mary one of his keen glances and, having replenished his cup from the coffee urn, drank it down at a gulp.

"Now, Miss Mary," he said, "I want to have a little serious talk with you. All this sort of thing, you know, has got to stop. I don't intend to have you looking this way any longer. Why, my child, you've grown thin, you've grown pale and, upon my word, you've grown to look older, all in the last month. You're only the ghost of the Mary

Calvert who used to brighten us all up. I tell you, this will never do. Oh, I know, I know. At your age everything looks eternal. You children can never believe that the sun has not dropped entirely from the heavens, when as a matter of fact it has only gone behind a cloud. My poor, silly child, can't you see that the cloud is sure to pass?"

Mary only shook her head wearily. She kept her eyes closed. She could not trust herself to look at him, far less could she attempt speech.

"Why not come to Europe with my little party? You've never been, and if nothing else, so great a change of scene would be sure to divert your mind. I cannot say when we will go. I had originally planned for the early summer, but I might be able to hasten it. And then, upon our return, say, in five or six months, things will have blown over a bit and our young friend may be reconciled to accepting aid and comfort from the enemy, meaning myself."

"I am very grateful to you, Mr. Whitelaw. I want you to know how much I appreciate all that you and Alice have——"

"Mayor Hoffman is here, sir. And wants to see you at once," said the maid.

"Oh, I can't see that man, I can't see that man," said Mary hysterically. "Please, Mr. Whitelaw, don't ask me to see him." And she rushed from the room.

## CHAPTER XX.

It was a very different Hoffman from the terrified, flabby and spineless object that has been a familiar figure in these pages that appeared in the library now. His raiment was almost bewildering in its dazzling newness. His watch chain, stretched across the front of his ample waistcoat, shone with a fresh lustre. His face, while no less flabby than of yore, had lost all its appearance of pallor and was now a pleasant, even red. His small eyes twinkled with good humor; in short, his whole appearance indicated a mind at ease in a prosperous body.

"Good evening, Mr. Mayor," said Whitelaw, "this is a surprise."

"A pleasant one I hope," said the Mayor jovially.

"Surely. Is there anything I can do for you?"

"Well, not for me, exactly," said Hoffman. "Still, there's something you can do."

"And what is that?"

"I'll come to it in a minute. Seen the papers?"

"Yes. Won't you sit down?" The Mayor seated himself, as is the ludicrous habit of large men, embarrassed when they find themselves out of their own social sphere, in the very smallest chair the room afforded, a slim-legged, gilt affair, which, as a matter of fact, belonged in Alice's writing room and had been brought in by that young lady for some purpose of her own only that morning. Mr. Whitelaw suppressed a smile with difficulty as he thought of the peril the unconscious gilt chair stood in in attempting to sustain the Mayor's bulk.

"I think you'd be a bit more comfortable in this leather chair, Mr. Hoffman. I always sit in it myself. A substantial man, you know, needs a substantial support. Let me offer you a cigar."

"Oh, try one of mine, try one of mine," said Hoffman affably. "I've been smoking on you a good deal the last week or two while we were having our various little business deals together." He held out to Whitelaw two cigars of dubious hue and doubtful shape, accompanying his hospitable offer with a wink of good fellowship.

For a moment a wave of disgust swept over Whitelaw. He was thoroughly hardened, not

in the least thin-skinned and too much of a philosopher not to be perfectly aware of the natural penalty that follows the touching of pitch. But for the moment his soul sickened within him. He would not change his methods if he could. He fought his fight with the weapons of his century, he told himself, but he none the less bitterly deplored the means he was forced to use as typified by the exuberant Hoffman, whose wink suggested not only a familiar understanding between them, but a sort of hideous intimacy as well. He accepted one of the proffered cigars, however, with his unfailing courtesy and prepared himself for the inevitable martyrdom which must ensue upon the smoking of it.

“Well, Mr. Mayor, what’s on your mind?”

“Wells,” said the Mayor with unwonted brevity.

“I see he has had a difficulty with his Committee of Seventy. To use a somewhat discourteous, if graphic phrase, they appear to have kicked him out.”

“Yes, and publicly denounced and damned him.”

Whitelaw flicked an ash from his cigar.

"Still he had the consolation of not being alone. Not to put too fine a point on it, you kept him company, didn't you, Mr. Mayor?"

"You mean that I was kicked out too?"

Whitelaw made an ironic gesture of assent.

"Well, it's a horse of another color with me and you know why it's different," said Hoffman in a tone which, for once in his life, seemed genuine. "I say, you know why it's different," he repeated querulously.

"Oh, I don't know."

"Yes, you do. You know that Wells is on the square."

"Does that worry you?"

"Yes, it does worry me. Why can't you be on the level for once?" he said coarsely. "You'd never got me so easy. If you hadn't put me up against it, I'd never gone through the thing at any price."

"It's a little late now to go into all that, isn't it?" said Whitelaw.

"Oh, I didn't come up here to do the baby act and whine about myself. But I did come to see why the devil you won't do the right thing by him?"

"What course would you suggest?" said Whitelaw, with the air of one sufficiently broad-minded to accept any suggestion.

"Well, I think the time's come to leave that fellow alone."

"Well, I'm leaving him alone."

"No, you're not. And you've gone far enough with him. I know I have. He never did me any harm and you bamboozled me into thinking that he was in on that deal up to the night your franchises were passed."

"Well, what of that?"

"You know that was a lie. You knew it all the time. So did John Shanley. So did O'Hearn. And you made me, without my knowing it, act as if I were trying to shoulder part of the blame on him. Well, you got what you wanted and I paid for my whistle; so I think that now Wells is friendless, kicked off his own committee, read out of his party, drummed out of camp, the time has come to square things up a bit and let him have another chance. It's up to me to help him. And you must help me help him. Understand? We've got to do it together."

"A rather delicate task! How do you propose going about it?"

"That's just what I don't know. With money I suppose."

"Yes. Do you mean give him a chance to go into business? Or baldly offer him money?"

"Oh, I can't put it into words exactly, and you know I can't," said Hoffman, rising restlessly and pacing up and down the room, puffing violently at his cigar. "Give him something else besides a kick, anyway."

"And you think he'll accept it from you?"

"That's the hell of it," wailed Hoffman, "I don't think he'll even speak to me."

"I think it's quite likely he won't," said Whitelaw dryly. "Now, if you've any confidence in me, let me advise your leaving the whole thing to me. I can work it better without you."

"Have you got a scheme?"

"I won't say exactly that I have a scheme, but I know this. I have a very strong interest in the young lady he's in love with. Now, if he's got any sense at all in his head, he'll be satisfied with one good dose of reform and will be willing to settle down and behave himself and marry."

"That's the talk," said Hoffman enthusiastically.

"Beg pardon, sir," said the voice of Williams at the door, "but Mr. Richard Wells has just called, sir, and he wants to know if he can see you at once, Mr. Whitelaw?"

"Well, wouldn't that scald you!" said Hoffman in an ecstasy of astonishment.

"You know the proverb about speaking of the devil," said Whitelaw easily. "Show him in at once, Williams."

"Very good, sir."

"You're not going, Hoffman?"

"Oh, yes, I think I will," said Hoffman uneasily. "I can just go out this way, can't I?" He began hurriedly to look for his hat, forgetting entirely that he had consigned it to the tender mercies of Williams, who had opened the door for him. Whitelaw took a malicious pleasure in letting him search for it. He couldn't imagine what Wells' errand might be, but it would certainly be more amusing to have Hoffman present.

"Are you going to talk to him now?" said Hoffman.

"Why certainly. I thought you were in such a hurry to begin the good work?"

"Good evening, Mr. Whitelaw. Hullo, Hoffman, what luck to find you here. Talk about killing two birds with one stone. This is going to be just immense."

Wells' voice had just the proper note of high good humor. To look at him, fresh, smiling and debonnair, apparently without a

regret in the world, wholly carefree, one was disposed to discredit wholly the stories which filled the evening papers and the whispers which were abroad. Where was the heart-broken, dejected and disgraced young man, publicly branded by the party which, but for his leadership, could never have existed, as a traitor, a grafter and a thief. Even Whitelaw found his manner disconcerting. Richard came into the room without waiting for a further invitation and again, without being invited, seated himself at a point of vantage at the long table where he could observe the frankly perturbed Hoffman and his host at the same moment. If it had not been for his overflowing high spirits and good temper, which were obviously genuine, his attitude would have been faintly impertinent. Whitelaw was too old a campaigner not to have recovered his balance almost upon the instant of his losing it, but he found time for a passing wonder as he looked at Wells. For the first time he was not quite sure of his victory. He was too keen a judge of men to mistake Wells' air for one of empty bravado. For the first time in his life he experienced the faint, prophetic chill which foretold defeat. On general principles, he fired the first shot:

"I was extremely sorry to see in the evening papers, Mr. Wells, of the intemperately radical action adopted by your Committee of Seventy."

"Oh, I think you are a bit harsh in your terms, Mr. Whitelaw. The committee erred in judgment, of course, but had there been any foundation for their action nothing, in my judgment, could have been too radical in the way of punishment."

"Mr. Wells," said Whitelaw solemnly, "I told you in this very room that sooner or later the common people would turn upon you and rend you and let you die like a dog."

"If you mean that all that has happened to me," said Wells lightly, "I sure am a pretty lively corpse."

"Wells, I'm sorry that——" broke in Hoffman, who had been shifting uneasily from one foot to the other.

"Now don't you interrupt, Gus," said Wells kindly enough. He was perfectly convinced that Hoffman, in his weak, spineless way, was both sorry and repentant. "I want to do a little talking here with Mr. Whitelaw and when I have quite finished, if you've any suggestions to make, why, all right."

"Still, I'm sorry," said Hoffman doggedly.

"Save all your compassion, Gus. You may need it later for yourself."

"I can only repeat, Mr. Wells, that I warned you that your defeat was inevitable. And, to do myself justice, I must say that I remarked at the time——"

A shade of annoyance just flitted across Richard's face. "Let's not have a lot of talk. Pardon me, Mr. Whitelaw, but I know how more than competent you are in the role of lecturer to erring youths. But I don't care to listen. I remember distinctly every word that you said to me not long ago in this very room. Let's get down to business. I don't think it'll take me over three minutes to finish."

Whitelaw rose from his chair. There was a gleam of anger in his eye. He showed his uneasiness by, just for the fraction of a second, losing complete control over himself. "My dear young man, if you have come here merely to be impertinent, allow me, to paraphrase your admirably courteous remark, to mention in passing that I also remember distinctly how 'not long ago in this very room' you were impertinent to me before. I am not the sort of man to whom people are often impertinent twice."

"Mr. Whitelaw, this visit is distinctly on business."

"Well, what is this famous business?"

"It has to do both with yourself and with Hoffman. There are just two things to be done," said Dick. His voice was slow and distinct; he enunciated his words as carefully as if he were speaking to a large audience and wished the man furthest from him to catch his every word. "In the first place, Hoffman, you must resign. I think you had better leave the country. In the second place, Mr. Whitelaw, the Committee of Seventy are about to bring suit to set aside and invalidate the ordinances, fraudulently approved by the Mayor, giving your gas and traction companies the renewal of their franchises for a term of ninety-nine years. You too, Mr. Whitelaw, had better perhaps take a trip to Europe. It would spare you some personal annoyance. You see, after all, it is quite simple."

"Simplicity itself. In fact, it is so simple that I'm waiting to know what serious demands you and your Committee of Seventy have to make," said Whitelaw ironically.

"We demand nothing more," said Wells quietly.

"And you want these—simple things done immediately?"

"Within twenty-four hours."

"Well, you're clean, stark, raving crazy, that's all I've got to say," blustered Hoffman.

"Possibly. But my sanity or insanity has nothing to do with it."

With a show of deliberation that was possibly a trifle theatric, Wells took from his pocket a folded paper. "I have here a copy of the stenographic report of an interview held between O'Hearn, Shanley and you, Hoffman, in this house on the day that the cornerstone was laid for the new Refuge for Homeless Working Girls. There was no record that Mr. Whitelaw was present, but he is doubtless aware of what transpired at that momentous interview, since it was had in his house. The original is locked up in a safety deposit vault. The stenographer who made it is now under the protecting wing of Harry Day, of the *Globe*. He is prepared to swear to the authenticity of the report."

Hoffman sank heavily down in the nearest chair. Fortunately it was not Alice's favorite gilt one.

"My God! I knew I'd lost that, but I hoped that it had been destroyed."

"Why didn't you tell me, you fool?" snarled Whitelaw.

"One thing I'll put down to your mutual credit," said Dick with a grim smile, "you at least have the grace not to offer any defense."

"Well, what's the idea, Wells?" said Hoffman.

Wells did not answer him directly. "It's lucky this thing was found," he mused, "I haven't blamed you so much since I knew this, Gus. They got you into a hole and squeezed you tight and you didn't have the nerve to stand pat. If you'd only come to me and told me about your difficulty, we would have dug up the money somewhere. But you sold out. Now I want your resignation sent to the Common Council by nine o'clock tomorrow morning. Then you'd better get out of the country for awhile."

"But if I resign—"

"There's no 'but' about it. Either you resign as Mayor or I'll have you in jail; that's all. You can go."

"But I say, Whitelaw—"

"I take no interest in this affair of yours, Mr. Hoffman. It really doesn't concern me."

“But I——”

“Good-night, Mr. Mayor,” said Whitelaw. He crossed the room and touched the bell for Williams. “I shall have to trouble you to go out the other way. You will find your hat outside.”

“But I don’t know how to word the resignation,” whined Hoffman.

“In the plainest English,” said Dick. “Write it this way: ‘I hereby resign as Mayor of this city, the resignation to take effect immediately.’ Let them guess the rest.”

Hoffman started to say something more, but observing the immaculate Williams already in the doorway, he passed out with a mumbled good-night. For a moment there was silence between the two men left in the library. Then Dick began:

“Mr. Whitelaw, what you have done to me and to mine in the interest of your system I don’t care to discuss with you just now. But thank Heaven it can all be undone. You and I won’t have to have any argument over this thing. You are too good a business man not to understand it.”

“I shall not commit myself in any way,” said Whitelaw.

"You won't need to. To-night is Thursday. There are ships sailing every day from New York. Send me a letter waiving a defense to the suit which we will institute to knock out those franchises, clear my character beyond the shadow of a doubt, and I will wait until you are out of touch, even by the wireless, before I make a move. There is no reason you shouldn't enjoy yourself in London, Mr. Whitelaw. There is a colony of insurance financiers sojourning there at the present time. I believe they accept your theories of economics and of government."

"I shall write a letter to you to-morrow, Mr. Wells, following the lines you suggest. But, understand, I personally admit nothing. I bid you good-night, sir."

"Don't you overlook something?" Wells remained seated, although his host had risen to his feet.

"I am not aware of having done so."

"Well, this has nothing to do with politics. This is a purely personal matter. It has been part of your plan to misrepresent and degrade me to Miss Calvert. I don't know what you have told her, but I frankly tell you, Mr. Whitelaw, that she is more to me than all the franchises and offices in the world. Be

good enough to send for her and square me."

"You mean that I must explain to her before you?"

"Exactly."

"Humiliate myself?"

"What about my humiliation? I think I am letting you off pretty easy and, by the way, you can thank Mary and your daughter for my leniency."

Once more Whitelaw moved toward the bell.

"Never mind sending," said Dick; "she's here," for Mary stood in the doorway.

"I beg your pardon. I thought you were alone, Mr. Whitelaw."

"No, I'm here, Mary. Come in."

"If you'll excuse me——" Mary began.

"Please come in, Miss Mary. I——"

Whitelaw hesitated.

She came in at his bidding. But the sadness of her face was unlightened and her mournful eyes never once met Dick's, but were fastened upon Whitelaw's face.

As Whitelaw seemed momentarily unable to continue, Wells spoke.

"Perhaps I can assist you. But I want to ask you first, Mary: have you still absolute confidence in Mr. Whitelaw's word as a gen-

tleman? I remember your telling me once he was a gentleman."

"I still think so," said Mary dully.

"Very good. Now I want you, Mr. Whitelaw, to tell Mary that everything that has been said derogatory to my character is absolutely untrue. I want you to tell her that my having been expelled from the Committee of Seventy was the result of a conspiracy planned by you. I want you to tell her that, to-night in this room, Mayor Hoffman promised to resign and that, on account of your kindness to her, you are to be given the opportunity to take an early trip to Europe. Is this the truth?"

"Miss Mary, I don't care to discuss these affairs with you or Mr. Wells. But I will say to you that he is a truthful young man and I give you my word of honor, if you still value it, that he has done nothing at any time that should in any way cause you to lower your high opinion of him. For the moment I will not go into details." He turned to Dick. "Is that satisfactory?"

"Perfectly. Do you understand, Mary?"

"I can't say I do. It all sounds so mysterious. But I don't care, Dick, as long as I can have absolute faith in you again."

"I will leave you two together, if you will excuse me," said Whitelaw. "I wish to see my daughter Alice. Mr. Wells, I think perhaps you had better open one of those windows. Mr. Hoffman has been smoking his own cigars. Good-night."

And once more they were alone together.

## CHAPTER XXI.

Of course she took refuge in tears, realizing, even as she did so, that they sprang not entirely from unhappiness, shame and self-reproach. That they came at all was an augury of happier days. There had been a time when the relief afforded by their healing flow had been denied her parched eyes. With her head on his shoulder, his strong arm about her and his hand stroking her bowed head, she had her cry out.

"Never mind, old girl. I know. I have known all along. We'll forget together."

"Forget?" sobbed Mary. "I shall never forget nor forgive myself. It would serve me only right if you stopped loving me and left me and fell in love with some other girl."

"Well," said Richard, with the air of one in profound reflection, "there's Kate Emerson. She isn't just your style of course. But I apprehend that an entire change of style is what you would recommend. To be sure, Harry Day seems to have the inside track in that quarter. Still, who knows but

Kate might be educated to the point where she would appreciate my superior charms?"

At this preposterous speech Mary laughed in spite of herself. And, having once given way to laughter, was compelled to take her head from her lover's shoulder and dry her eyes, which may have been the effect he was aiming at. At all events, she did not apparently regard the fair Kate as a really serious rival.

"I think it a most splendid idea. And it makes everything so much easier and simpler for me. As a matter of fact, Mr. Whitelaw has asked me only this evening to join Alice, Miss Whitelaw and himself on a trip to Europe this summer. He expects to go within a month or two and I have been wondering what to say."

"I think it more than likely that he'll go a good deal sooner than he planned earlier in the evening. In all probability he'll get to New York in time to sail by the Saturday boat," said Dick grimly. "Also I know just what you'll say. You'll say: 'No, sir,' and: 'Thank you kindly, sir, but I have another engagement, as I am going to be married to Richard Wells, no less, to-morrow-day.' "

"Married to-morrow? Why, Dick, you're stark, staring mad!"

"Not a doubt of it," said that masterful young man. "And you certainly should know that mad people must always be humored and indulged. So there's nothing to do but to obey, Miss Rebel."

"But I never could get ready in time."

"Now, what have you to get ready? That's my work, if you please. If it weren't so late I should go and get the license and hunt up the parson and we would be married to-night. But it can't be did. But, to-morrow morning, at eleven o'clock—we must have plenty of beauty sleep so as to look the blushing bride and bridegroom to the life—I will come for you and, first off, we will take a street-car ride out in the West End. There's a flat out there that I want to show you. On the way back we'll dig up a parson person. Are you on?"

"I'm on, you awful creature," said Mary, burying her head once more in his shoulder.

The rest of this highly interesting conversation was intended only for the ears of the high contracting parties.

Having said good-night an entirely unnec-

essary number of times, the last occasion taking place on the steps of the front porch, to the utter scandal of a neighbor's cat, who promptly scuttled away once the ceremony was concluded to retail the entire happening to a friend in the next yard, Mary watched until Richard had nobly braved the perils of the street and reached the corner in safety. Of course he turned his head at least half a dozen times in his progress to smile back at her, totally ignoring the darkness. A number of times he had waved his hand and once, in a spasm of rapture, he had awkwardly kissed that rather unlovely member. It is to be presumed that his keen eye had suddenly discovered new beauties in it never beheld before.

Then and not till then she went to her room. There was much to be done in the way of packing, now that she had yielded to Richard's mad plan to be married the next day.

"You dear, lovely room, I am going to say good-by to you." She went about the room with pretty, coquettish little gestures of farewell, stroking now this object, now that, as if it were a sentient thing. When she came before her favorite picture, a little photograph of an obscure artist's conception of

Jeanne d'Arc, she leaned forward and kissed it lightly.

"I'm not really saying good-by to you, dear, Alice must let me take you with me. We have braved some difficult hours together."

With this thought for the moment her mood changed. She forgot the pleasure she and Alice had had in refurnishing her chamber. To some people a room in which one has suffered is always a haunted room. Always the ghost of the unforgotten sorrow lurks in the corners, ready to snatch at one as one passes. This feeling even applies to houses with which one has no personal association. At the turn of a road one comes suddenly, for the first time, upon a strange house and hurries by with the instinctive knowledge that some one has suffered there and that it is not decent to linger.

The voice of Miss Whitelaw in the hall below broke in upon this melancholy train of thought to Mary's great relief. She laughed aloud at the whimsical picture her ready imagination drew of Miss Whitelaw's horrified amazement at the news of the unconventional step she was contemplating for the next day. She was perfectly sure that the

Leader of Society, after having in general terms pointed out that such things were never done, would make a fantastic appeal to her honor as a proper secretary. Clearly rehabilitation for Mary lay only in the desperate hope that she might persuade Mrs. De Forest's secretary to marry the grocer's boy clandestinely.

But in reality she had no intention of communicating her news to her employer. It was certainly the right of Alice and her father to have it first straight from her own lips. She could count on Alice for sincere sympathy and all the good wishes in the world. And Mr. Whitelaw's approval must, in a sense, be the measure of his atonement.

From the depths of her closet she drew her small trunk. Would its modest capacity suffice for her amplified wardrobe? Alice's generous heart had been so fertile in devising expedients which made the best owing of this or that dainty trifle absolutely necessary. Then, too, in the enjoyment of the unheard-of wealth her salary afforded, she had been guilty of many feminine extravagances on her own account. She began taking from its hook one pretty gown after another. Each one to her had some association, since she

was a woman and in love. Some she patted softly as she folded them; one, it must be recorded, she shook more violently than would have seemed necessary to remove an imaginary fleck of dust. She even kissed the hem of one gown with all the fervor of a pilgrim at a shrine.

“You darling thing. Do you remember the first night I wore you when we had dinner together?”

She was kneeling upon the floor in a litter of boxes and trays and mysterious packages done up in towels when an exclamation from Alice in the doorway fell upon her startled ear and caused her to blush guiltily.

“Well, Mary Calvert, if you’re not the very smartest girl in the world. Why, you’re nearly half packed. I thought I was to have the fun of breaking the news to you. How did you hear it?”

“How did I hear it?” Mary gazed at her with amazed eyes. “You thought you were going to break the news to me? ‘It’s a mad world, my masters,’ ” quoted Mary fervently. The comforting reflection came to her that in this insane sphere Richard wouldn’t be so painfully conspicuous.

“Why, I certainly understood Father to

say when he joined us at the club that he had left you back here with Mr. Wells?"'

"He never spoke a truer word," said Mary.

"Well, then, how did he get a chance to tell you?"'

"After your father left, naturally," said Mary lucidly.

"After Father——" Alice seated herself upon the divan with a certain desperate and judicial calmness. "After all," she said, "conversation, at least as far as we are concerned, seems to be in its infancy, if not in its dotage. I give you my word that not one syllable that you've uttered since I came into this house has any meaning of any kind whatever!"'

"Oh, hasn't it!" said Mary scornfully.

"Kindly allow me to recapitulate your insane remarks, coupled with my own, which, as usual, are characterized by crystal clarity. In the first place," Alice enumerated her topics on the fingers of one hand, pointing a judicial forefinger of the other at the defiant Mary. "In a perfectly ladylike manner I expressed mild astonishment that the news had reached you before my arrival, explaining in unmistakable terms my understanding that my

father, having left you with Mr. Wells, was unable to tell it to you. Now I appeal to your better nature, does your gibbering answer that he 'told you after he left, naturally,' mean anything under Heaven? I answer for you. It does not."

"The trouble is with having too many 'he's,'" said Mary sternly.

Alice gave a despairing shudder. "Now Heaven give me patience," she said piously. "A little knowledge of English grammar, which, I regret to say, seems to be a sealed book to you, might help you to interpret my remarks. 'He', naturally, refers to my father."

"Really?" said Mary. "I take it to refer to Richard."

With a tragic gesture, Alice tore her hat from her head and proceeded to give an imitation of a tragedy queen tearing out locks of hair and scattering them abroad in the most approved fashion. When she had once more been restored to a measure of calmness she began again.

"Do you mean to say that my father told Mr. Wells the news?"

This last question was too much for flesh and blood. Mary, having thrown her-

self into the hospitable depths of a fath-  
erly armchair, gave way to elfish laugh-  
ter that bordered upon the hysterical.  
What Alice's news was she could not even  
remotely conjecture. She had quite for-  
gotten Wells' dark hint as to the probability  
of Mr. Whitelaw's hastening his departure.  
Certainly Alice was as completely in the dark  
as herself. Certainly, even she could not  
suppose that Mr. Whitelaw had proposed for  
Richard, or, in a paroxysm of prophecy, had  
foretold to either of them the imminence of  
their nuptials. Several times, as she was  
about to regain sufficient control of herself  
to permit of speech, one look at Alice's face  
sent her into fresh convulsions. Alice, who  
had some talent for mimicry, wore the expres-  
sion of an Early Christian Martyr as one to  
the manner born.

"Alice, I haven't the remotest idea of what  
you're talking about. And certainly you  
haven't the darkest inkling of what I have  
in mind. The fact is that everything has  
been explained——"

"The explanation has not reached me,"  
said Alice. "And if everything has been  
explained, why is it that nobody understands  
anything?"

"Between Mr. Wells and me," said Mary, ignoring the interruption. "And oh, Alice dear, I'm going to be married. To-morrow." She threw herself into her friend's arms in a paroxysm of tears.

Alice deferred any expression of amazement. Following a natural feminine inclination, she cried instead. Chances for being amazed occurred daily to the receptive mind, but to have a good cry in the arms of one's dearest friend is an opportunity which only a wastrel would neglect.

Mr. Whitelaw, having consumed his last cigar for the night, stopped at his daughter's door for a final word. The door stood open, the room was empty and in darkness.

"She will be in Mary's room," he said to himself. "I'll just look in on them. If I don't, those silly children will be laughing, chattering and planning until daylight."

His expression, as he stood in the doorway of Mary's room, was a fair imitation of the one his daughter had worn half an hour earlier upon the same spot. One of the happy, laughing, chatting children was seated on the floor, her head buried in the other's lap, her slight body shaken with convulsive sobs. The other, with her face buried in a moist handkerchief,

was patting the bowed head, sobbing out terms of endearment meanwhile.

"What in the name of Heaven——" began Mr. Whitelaw.

For a second there was no reply. And then Alice, lifting a tear-stained, swollen face, reassured him with the crystal clarity for which, as she had observed earlier, she was justly famous.

"Nothing's the matter, you dear old goose! We are having a beautiful time. This odious Mary is going with us to that horrid Wells man and isn't going to be married. That is, she isn't going with us and is going to be married, I mean. And I think it's perfectly dreadful and I never was so happy before in all my life."

Mr. Whitelaw did the only thing possible. He sat down and waited. Alice, having apparently explained everything to her complete satisfaction, returned to the enjoyment of her tears. As she showed no sign of exhausting the visible supply, Mary, who still felt a bit guilty as far as Mr. Whitelaw was concerned, straightened herself up and dabbed at her swollen eyes with a wet rag which had once been a handkerchief. She still played a regular tattoo with her disen-

gaged hand upon Alice's shoulder. As she looked at Mr. Whitelaw she felt a sudden pang at heart. For the first time since she had known him he had a look of age. Gone for the time at least was his air of spruce jauntiness. He was no longer the well-preserved, middle-aged man who has kept the approaching years at bay. The suggestion of sadness and age was subtle but unmistakable. Could the defeat, which he had met at the hand of Wells, have caused so great a change so suddenly? Mary had too much vanity to believe it. To her mind came instantly the recollection of Mrs. Gridges' insinuation. She felt a wave of pity sweeping over her which dimmed her eyes afresh.

"Mr. Whitelaw," she said, "I'm sure you didn't quite understand Alice. I don't know quite how you could." She gave Alice an affectionate little shake. "And I'm sure I hope you'll forgive me and not think me the most ungrateful beast of a girl on earth. But I'm going to marry Mr. Wells. Right away. To-morrow. So I'm not going to accept your beautiful invitation to go abroad with you and see all the lovely things I've dreamed about so long. I don't suppose I shall ever see them now. I think Dick and I will always

be quite poor. But then, one can't have everything. I love him so much, Mr. Whitelaw. I have always loved him, even when I suspected him and distrusted him and doubted him. And as I was quite wrong I'm going to atone as far as may be by marrying him to-morrow, hasty, unconsidered and inconsiderate as it may seem. I repeat, I hope you will forgive me and not think me utterly ungrateful. I'm sorry to have to break the news to you so suddenly."

"I was prepared for it, Miss Mary. Indeed, I'm not at all surprised, even at its suddenness," he said gently.

"I suppose every one will think I am foolish, if not quite wrong. I can't help it if they do. I love him. I suppose it is a sentimental and old-fashioned notion, but I can't help but think that love is the greatest thing in the world and worth everything else."

Mr. Whitelaw rose from his chair. There was none of his characteristic briskness in his movement. He first laid his hand on his daughter's shoulder as she, with responsive affection, raised her tear-stained face to his. He kissed her on the mouth and then, taking Mary's head between his hands, he kissed her tenderly upon the forehead.

"What else is there?" he said. And so he left them.

It was the simplest possible wedding in the world. Just Alice and Harry Day and themselves. Mary had a nervous apprehension that Day might wish to bring Kate Emerson. But, if the thought had crossed that young man's head, he had wisely suppressed it. It was not a gay wedding. Was it because it was such a happy one? Gaiety does not always connote happiness. And then too, this goal had been reached only after traversing such a stony path. They had followed Richard's plan and gone first to see the little flat out in the West End. Mary had felt keen relief to discover that it was quite new and had never been occupied. There would be no legacy of another's sorrow or pain awaiting them in their new home. That was as it should be. She would be able to bear, she told herself, any future sorrow that was her own with courage and fortitude, for then she would not have to bear it alone. Sickness, sorrow, death, yes and even dishonor she could bear, now that they were once together.

Of course any sort of wedding journey was out of the question. Dick whimsically sug-

gested that at last he was to have the opportunity of carrying out a plan long cherished. They would husband their resources and then, on the fiftieth anniversary of their wedding, he hoped, their youthful ardor and enthusiasm would be sufficiently tempered by age to enable them to go to Niagara Falls in a perfectly decorous manner. "And I am sure, by that happy day, the Falls will yet look quite young compared with us."

Or—Dick was never a man of one idea—he pointed out that their united bank accounts would enable one of them to go upon quite a respectable trip. He suggested tossing a coin in order to determine which one should embark upon this enchanting excursion and which one should remain behind and put the flat in order. He even went the length of tossing a brand new five-dollar gold piece as they were leaving the parsonage, shrilly urging Mary to call heads or tails. Mary had sufficient presence of mind to reach the fallen coin first, which she very properly appropriated.

Alice and her father were to take the train for the East at four. Mary had insisted, although Dick protested that it was unheard of, unbelievable, unbearable and quite con-

trary to the statutes, upon returning with Alice and helping her with her final preparations. In return for the permission, which he declined to give, she gave way with a little secret reluctance to his suggestion that they give a dinner party to celebrate the event out at the McFarlanes, which dinner was to include both Harry Day and the sprightly Miss Emerson. It was arranged that they should all meet at the station to say good-by to Alice.

"I'm afraid it will make Mr. Whitelaw just a bit hysterical, quite out of his head, in fact, to say good-by to me," said Dick. "These partings simply lacerate one." But he consented in spite of his forebodings and departed with muttered threats about looking up the marriage laws to discover just what punishment could be meted out to a wife who abandoned her lord and master at the very steps of the altar.

They all met at the station accordingly, Mr. Whitelaw having wisely planned the arrival of his party so as to give the least possible margin for farewells. Mary had again the feeling that he had aged a decade in twenty-four hours. Alice looked sweet and charming in her pretty traveling dress. She affected an air of great responsibility and assured the others

that chaperoning Aunt Emma at the courts of the Old World was a task which she had not undertaken lightly. Kate Emerson loudly lamented that ocean steamers didn't sail from the station. It would have been so much more exciting. Day thoughtfully took the occasion to remind her that it was just possible that the hectic excitement would wear off after one had been becalmed, say a year, on the tideless railway.

"Don't be a goose," said Kate. "Any one but you would know what I meant. I saw a Mississippi steamer once, when I was about three years old, and it was the cunningest thing, although, of course, I don't in the least remember it. And everybody says that the ocean steamers are even darlinger. Do you know," she said with fine irrelevance, "that my mother once told me that I was nearly six years old before I could pronounce the name of the Mississippi River properly?"

"You don't say so!" said Day.

"I didn't say I did. It was my mother who said so," said Kate severely.

Aunt Emma, of course, was even more stately than usual. She quite ignored the presence of Wells until she remembered his vocation.

"I only hope," she said severely, "that the papers won't mention my going abroad. But if you can't prevent it, I should take it kindly if you would mention it as purely a social trip. I have a letter to a lady whose brother married the sister of a cousin of the nephew of the German Emperor. I fear that it will mean a tiresome round of dinners and balls. If I could choose, I shouldn't see anything of society whatever on this trip. What I really need is a complete rest. And then society in Europe is so different and foreign."

Of course, just before the warning cry of "All aboard," the three girls had time for embraces and kisses and a brief but enjoyable flow of tears. It was what the sacrilegious Day was wont to describe as a regular "sob-fest." And then the train pulled away while Mary watched with dimmed eyes Alice and Mr. Whitelaw waving their handkerchiefs from the rear platform of their special car as long as their train was in sight. It was only after it had disappeared around an engulfing curve that she had the opportunity to examine a crushed piece of paper which Alice had thrust into her hand. It was a check for five thousand dollars. And the signature was that of Alice. She showed it

to Dick with brimming eyes. She felt that an important chapter of her life was finished. Before her lay the fresh page of a new and momentous one.

They drove out to the McFarlanes in separate buggies. Day insisted that he and Kate should take the lead, modestly expressing the wish that they might be considered worthy to be the advance agents of the bride and groom. He muttered dark hints about regretting that there was not sufficient time to strew the five miles of country road with orchids and pomegranate blossoms. He inquired of Kate in an elaborate aside if he were right in stating that a pomegranate had a blossom. That astute young lady declined to be entrapped, confining herself to the remark that the only granite she knew was made of marble and certainly had no blossom.

Mary and Dick were glad enough to follow the suggestion. Not since her abandonment of him at the altar had Mary had a moment alone with her husband. Moreover, he had whispered in her ear the wicked suggestion that he knew a road to the McFarlanes nearly twice as long as the one Day would probably take. Unfortunately, the surest test of shrewdness in the world is how much of that

quality one calculates for in his estimate of another. If Dick knew a road twice as long as the one he judged his friend would take, that wily person apparently knew one a third longer than the one adopted by the bride and groom. It is a matter of history that the advance guard were the last to arrive by a full half-hour. Their feeble explanations about taking the wrong road, broken straps, loose horseshoes and so forth and so forth, were received with the contemptuous incredulity they certainly merited.

Mary being slightly solicitous, in spite of her natural preoccupation as to the fate of their dinner, already nearly an hour late, was reassured by the superior and scornful Marie Louise.

"My dear Mrs. Wells," she said severely, "we have had brides and grooms before. Mother wouldn't think of paying any attention to anything they say about the dinner or the time set for it. We simply regard them as hopeless. But curable," she added encouragingly.

Mary regretted at first that the early spring evening was still too raw to permit of their dining on the balcony, where she had first dined with Dick. But they were to have

a room quite to themselves, upstairs, which gave on the balcony. Mary uttered a cry of delight when finally, with the permission of Marie Louise, she entered the room. There stood Mrs. McFarlane, seeming larger, fatter, more good-natured and happier even than she remembered her. In honor of the occasion she was attired in a quaint, old-fashioned, black silk dress. Mary held out her hand in greeting, but there was something in the older woman's face that prompted her to kiss her. Throwing ceremony to the winds, Mrs. McFarlane flung both arms about her neck and kissed her again and again. Of course she cried.

“‘There’s no dew left on the daisies and  
clover,

There’s no rain left in Heaven,’ ”  
quoted Day softly.

But Mrs. McFarlane heard him and shook a threatening fist over Mary’s shoulder. “My dear, I cannot hope more for you than that you may be as happy as I was and that it may last twice as long,” she said. “You know,” she added more brightly, “I’ve always been quite silly over that husband of yours myself. Oh, you can ask Marie Louise.”

That unbending person nodded silently in confirmation.

"Can I believe my eye?" said Dick, dreading, with masculine cowardice, more tears. "If that isn't the very black silk dress she wore the day she couldn't squeeze into the church pew. I remember it as if it were yesterday."

"In my haste I said 'All men are liars,'" said Mrs. McFarlane with pious fervor. "And in the course of a long life I've never seen any reason to change my opinion. Remember it, indeed! It happened years before you were born. And I may say I think it very impolite of you to remind me how often I have told that story about how I made a fool of myself."

But her ire was soon appeased and she and Marie Louise consented to drink a toast to the bride and groom before departing for the lower regions.

The dinner was delicious and, as Dick said, they fairly licked the platters. It is certain they consumed it with much happy laughter and gaiety. But such is the ungrateful selfishness of lovers that it is doubtful if any of the four could have told one hour later three dishes of the repast over which Mrs. McFar-

lane had spent so much toil and thought. They had had their coffee, their liqueurs and cigarettes, when the evening being fine, Day was suddenly overcome with a tender anxiety as to the welfare of his faithful horse. He mentioned, with tears in his eyes, the many long journeys that they had taken together over arid wastes when they had cooled their parched throats from the same bucket; the mountains they had climbed—he had thought of adding trees, but dismissed it as being inartistic—of the rivers they had forded, of the countless perils by land and sea which they had faced and endured together. He appealed to the assembled company. Would it not be base ingratitude to abandon the friend of his childhood, his manhood and his riper years? They had grown, so to speak, from boyhood and ponyhood together. This last flight of fancy almost caused Mary's undoing, but she attributed her coughing spell to her first attempt at smoking a cigarette.

"Why, I think that's the duckiest thing I ever heard of. You two growing up together this way," said Kate with sparkling eyes.

In a fine glow of enthusiasm she consented to accompany this loyal friend of man and beast to the stable and hold the lantern for

him, since he confessed to being congenitally afraid of the dark.

Throwing her cloak about her shoulders, Mary opened the French window and stepped out upon the balcony. Richard stood by her side.

“Do you remember that night here, when we first had dinner together and of how you told me of all your plans? And the verse you recited to me? I can repeat it now. I have repeated it often, although, I confess, I couldn’t get help from it when I most wanted it. And that tree over there? You told me when your heart got tired you sometimes thought you would like to come and lie down under that tree until the Great Rest came. And I remember, oh, it seems so pitiful, how I nearly spoiled that evening in which you were trying to make me so happy, to give me so much pleasure, by being horribly jealous—it seems quite absurd now—of that odious little Simpson woman. Oh, Richard,” she said, “I’ve so much to learn and you must be so patient in teaching me. I ought not to stand upright beside you. I should crawl at your feet and beg your forgiveness for having doubted and disbelieved you. Where were my eyes that knew your face so well?

Where were my ears that knew the true ring  
of your voice? And what was my heart doing  
while my horrid, suspicious mind was whis-  
pering all those hideous doubts?"

"If you were as happy as I am now you  
will forget all these things. Besides, they  
belong to yesterday, when you were still  
Mary Calvert. Mary Wells must never think  
of Mary Calvert's mistakes." He took her  
in his arms and kissed her tenderly, on her  
eyes, her hair, her mouth.

"Mrs. Wells," he said with sternness, "if  
you will be good enough to get into your  
things, we will return to our respectable home  
in the poor but humble West End. I beg to  
remind you that, as a respectable married  
lady—by the way, you've neglected to ask for  
your marriage lines—you will have to keep  
more regular hours than you did when par-  
taking of the flesh-pots of the upper classes.  
No butler shall let you in in my house,  
Madam. You will have to learn to wield a  
night key."

"I'm sure I will do my best, sir, to learn,  
sir." And she gave a very good imitation of  
Mrs. McFarlane's curtsey.

THE END.

